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TALES FROM
THE DECAMERON

TALES FROM THE DECAMERON

By
GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

with
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES



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INTRODUCTION

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO was a man whose mind was occupied at one time or another with strikingly varied activities and interests. Six hundred years ago to-day he was a law-student at Naples; but a student far more interested in poetry and fiction than in law. Twenty odd years later, when he completed his *Decameron* (and incidentally had his fortieth birthday), he had already written in prose, besides the "Hundred Tales," a long romantic novel in two volumes, a shorter psychological novel, and various other works, some satirical and some fantastic. In verse he had composed a large number of short poems (which ultimately included over a hundred sonnets), an epic poem, which the English poet Chaucer translated or imitated in his *Knight's Tale*, and a number of other long poems, partly romantic (Chaucer turned one of these into his *Troilus and Cressida*), partly allegorical. Besides these works in Italian, he had written several Latin poems and had begun an elaborate encyclopedia of classical mythology, a scholarly and accurate work in which—like any twentieth-century professor—he was careful whenever possible, especially on doubtful questions, to cite his authority for what he wrote. After he was forty, he gave almost all his time to learned researches, including the study of Greek; he produced, in Latin, two biographical dictionaries, and a dictionary of classical geography said to be the first work of the kind arranged alphabetically, a method which has since been universally adopted. In the closing years of his life he was invited to give, in Italian, a series of lectures on Dante at the University of Florence, thus becoming the first Professor of Italian Literature in history.

He had also some experience in politics and diplomacy. The corruption and inefficiency of city politics in Florence (where he spent his boyhood and most of his subsequent life) so disgusted him that he once said he was ashamed to be living in such a city, and that when he went abroad he was tempted to register not as from Florence but as from

Certaldo. None the less, he held several minor offices under the municipality, and was several times sent by the government on delicate diplomatic missions to various princes and great men;—more than once to the Pope, who specially noted, in one of his official letters to the Florentine Republic, how favorably he had been impressed by the personality of their ambassador Giovanni Boccaccio.

With the commercial world, too, he was on familiar—though not on friendly—terms. His father was a highly successful business-man who had, before Boccaccio was fifteen, become an important member of one of the greatest banking houses in fourteenth-century Europe. This fact naturally brought young Giovanni into contact with the world of financial affairs; but his father's determined attempt to start him on a business career only served to inspire in him a life-long hatred for everything connected with commerce.

Boccaccio, then, for a man primarily interested in literature and learning, had remarkable opportunities for observing all sorts and conditions of men. That he profited by those opportunities to the full is evidenced to a greater or less degree in all his works; but in none of them is the extent and variety of his knowledge of human nature in all its manifestations so emphatically apparent as in his masterpiece, the Human Comedy of the Middle Ages,—the *Decameron* or *Ten Days' Stories*. Shakespeare himself has no greater variety, and certainly no more close, accurate, and vivid pictures of the men and women of his time: noble, peasant, merchant, priest, or king—all types you will—, with their feminine counterparts. And he shows us humanity in all its thousand inconsistent moods and moments: deeds of high idealism, self-sacrifice, generosity, or devotion on the one hand; and on the other, acts of selfishness, baseness, violence, or sheer sensuality. And besides these, touches in lighter vein: practical jokes, pictures of simple merriment and light-heartedness, anecdotes which depend for all their effect on a sudden incongruity, an unexpected turn of phrase or incident.

The *Decameron*, it has been said, deals with man as life does; never taking him very seriously, ever somewhat

mocking and ironical. Yet not without beauty and courtesy and human constancy too; in turn comic, tragic, lyric,—and frequently melodramatic. We must note also that, although Boccaccio is frequently satirical, it is seldom a bitter satire. He does not rant and rail as Dante (if we believe the contemporary Villani) was sometimes wont to do. Boccaccio satirises, not indeed without blaming, yet always gently, almost sympathetically, excusing and pardoning when he can because of “the misfortunes of the time.”

So the *Decameron* pictures life as a whole, as it was in the fourteenth century, and as in large degree it is now and will ever be: in some men noble and in others base; at times moving us to laughter, and at times to tears. It contains a hundred stories, supposedly narrated on ten different days by three young men and seven young women during a two weeks' house-party in the country. The occasion for their telling is significant: in the year 1348, during the raging of that great plague which in England men called Black Death, seven ladies chanced to meet in the church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence. They resolved to flee together from the pestilence, and to seek refuge in the country house of one of them near Fiesole, a mile or two outside the city. At that moment, three young men of their acquaintance happened to enter the church; for greater safety, the ladies asked them to go with them, an invitation willingly accepted. Among various ways of passing the time in the country, it was suggested that the latter part of each afternoon, from three o'clock on, should be spent in telling stories on a specific theme; each member of the party was to be in charge of one day's entertainment, and to decide the theme for the stories of that afternoon. This program was followed on ten different days; no tales were told on Friday, a day of fasting and devotions, nor on Saturday, since on Saturday afternoons the ladies always washed their hair. Two weeks having thus passed, they all went back to the city; their story-telling had been successful in making them forget, at least for those two weeks, the horrors of the plague.

Such, in Boccaccio's imagining, was the virtue of those

tales six centuries ago; such it has remained uninterruptedly since then: through all the intervening centuries and still to-day men read these fictions when they have troubles to forget or weariness to cajole,—when the body needs relaxation and the mind craves something different from the harrying problems of the moment.

Yet it is not alone for relaxation that Boccaccio's book is still so widely read. There is much to be learnt from it, both of life as it was in mediaeval Italy, and life as it is throughout the world to-day. Some matters have changed for the better since the fourteenth century,—a period of terrible abuses, for example, among certain of the clergy. Priests to-day are in general men of great ideals and high endeavour; Boccaccio sometimes pictures them (as they were on occasion in his day) men of sensuality or fraud. Other matters have changed in other ways: few wives, for instance, in the twentieth century would show the meekness, patience, and devotion of Griselda; whether this be for better or for worse a mere man does not venture at this day even to surmise. But although manners change, human beings, by and large, remain the same: practical jokers, servants witty or dishonest, lovers devoted and lovers trivial, wives long-suffering and wives—let us say—impatient, robbers, students, widows of many sorts, great men and little, merchants honest and fraudulent, judges and rulers wise or foolish,—all these are still with us as they were with Boccaccio. Fashion indeed forces them to change their clothes and their conveyances, perhaps to use more forks and fewer pens in one generation than another; their essential characteristics stay unaltered.

Nothing shows better both the excellence and the universality of these stories than the widely different uses made of them by writers from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. Every great work of literature is like a ring through which pass many threads coming from widely scattered points; the ring collects and concentrates them for a moment in one place; then they pass on, splitting up, spreading and scattering to infinitely more points than before. Boccaccio took the plots of his tales from various sources: one or two go back to classic authors—notably to

Apuleius; some to obscure anecdote collections (of little importance and no artistry) made earlier in Italy; some either come from the French *Fabliaux* or—more probably—derive from common sources with them. Others again were stories currently told in Florence, Naples, and other towns of Italy; heard by Boccaccio in his youth, doubtless repeated by him in many gatherings—sometimes formally social, sometimes informally jovial—and eventually written down by him for the benefit of posterity. These were in part local stories of one or another character of the town; in part travellers' tales, brought back by merchants and by sailors from the Orient and other places, near or far. Some stories, possibly a large proportion of them, must obviously have been Boccaccio's own invention; but it seems sure that most of them he had on one occasion or another either read or heard narrated.

The idea of setting all his tales in a general "framework" story probably came from a mediaeval version (known to Boccaccio) of the strange oriental collection known as *The Book of Sintipas* or *The Seven Sages*. In this not very plausible work, a certain young prince took a vow of silence for a definite period at the suggestion of his tutor. His stepmother attempted to seduce him, but he rejected her advances; whereupon (after the manner of Potiphar's wife) she accused him before the king his father, who condemned him to death. Seven wise men of the court, in order to gain time, took turns in telling stories to the king to persuade him not to act with undue haste: after each of their stories, however, the queen told another with the opposite moral; as a result, the young man was alternately pardoned and recondemned daily for a week. But the period of his silence was then at an end, and he was thus able to defend himself successfully.—Obviously it is a far cry from this improbable yarn to the natural and simple account of the ten young Florentines in whose mouths Boccaccio put his tales,—in itself another powerful tribute to the vivid and realistic quality of his genius.

Far more numerous, however, and more varied are the threads which lead to the imitations of his book, century after century. Not only did numberless Italian writers

subsequently use his plots for their own short stories, plays, and other works; poets, novelists, and playwrights in England, France, Germany, Spain, America, and other lands have constantly drawn on the *Decameron* for material. Petrarch, who had a weakness for Latin, was so impressed with the Griselda story, for example, that he translated it into Latin; Chaucer, in the same century, turned it into English—apparently from Petrarch's Latin; and in the nineteenth century the German Münch-Bellinghausen used it for his play *Griseldis*. Fifty years or so before this (in 1779), a greater German turned another of the tales into the famous play *Nathan der Weise*: this tale had been previously translated by the sixteenth-century Englishman Painter in his *Palace of Pleasure*. Portions of several of Shakespeare's plays, and at least two of his plots—*Cymbeline* and *All's Well That Ends Well*—were derived from the *Decameron* through intermediate versions. Molière took from it (also, it seems at second hand) part of the plot of his *George Dandin*; while Dryden in his two poems *Sigismunda* and *Guiscardo* and *Cymon and Iphigenia* copied directly two corresponding tales in Boccaccio's volume. So Keats drew his *Isabella* and Tennyson his play *The Falcon* from the fifth story of the fourth day and the ninth story of the fifth day respectively: the latter tale also inspired Longfellow's *The Falcon of Ser Federigo*. Still more recently in America, one of the most amusing incidents in *Colonel Carter of Cartersville* was borrowed from Boccaccio's account of the cook Chichibio's ready wit. And Boccaccio's idea of a natural framework to the stories (adapted by him from the wild Oriental *Sintipas*) has been taken over for innumerable collections since,—from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

The list could be carried on indefinitely; but this *Introduction* must leave all space possible for Boccaccio's self: too often nowadays we spend so much time talking or reading *about* a man that there is no time left to read his works. Before concluding, however, we must allow ourselves at least a few words on Boccaccio's technique as a writer of short stories.

First be it noted that his interest was primarily in the

stories themselves rather than in the "framework" account of how he imagines them to have been narrated. Hence, while the stories are particularly remarkable for the skill with which their characters are delineated, the characters of the ten young story-tellers are drawn very roughly. One of the young men, it is true, shows a preference for long-winded, involved and complicated tales; another's character is more simple and obvious, showing a predilection for the broadly and more obviously comic; and the third is an indelicate young man with a strong propensity for tales of the coarsest type. But while the three young men are drawn more or less as individuals, the ladies can in general scarce be told apart: two of them only show any difference in their natures from the rest. So it is that the *Decameron* contrasts most strikingly with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, written soon afterwards and likewise presenting a long series of short stories set in a "framework"-story which depicts the imaginary narrators. In Chaucer's work the stories sometimes weary us, but the tellers—the pilgrims themselves—are endlessly entertaining; in Boccaccio, the tales are seldom if ever tedious, but the tellers rarely interest us at all. The framework of the *Decameron* (though it includes a remarkable account of conditions in Florence at the time of the great plague) is little more than an excuse, and has for that reason been omitted from the present edition: it is the tales which are the thing!

They are usually told with remarkable skill, with no more description than is absolutely essential, and a maximum of action. They are admirably worked out: beginning with a brief analysis of the characters involved and of the situation, they then as a rule proceed rapidly with the development of the plot to its crisis, and finally set forth the brief solution, which is in almost every case the logical consequence of the reaction of the specific characters to the given situation. The stories are not mere plot; the dénouement always arises from the effect of the plot on the particular men and women concerned: it is invariably evident that, had the characters involved been different, the tale would almost inevitably have ended otherwise. And the characterization is always clever and clear cut,

in the humblest characters as in the noblest: the stupidity of Calandrino, the quick wit of Chichibio, the magnanimity of King Alfonso, the brutality of Sir William of Guardestaing, the rather simple-minded devotion of Federigo degli Alberighi, the cleverly fraudulent Fra Cipolla,—all these Boccaccio depicts so vividly that once we have been introduced to the characters we realise that the given situation could react on them in no other way than that described. Put any of the other characters in that situation, and the story would be utterly different. Herein lies one of Boccaccio's greatest qualities as a writer.

As to his prose style: at times, especially in self-conscious moments, he writes elaborate and involved sentences, though always "periodic" rather than "loose"; something after the fashion of Cicero, or of formal modern German prose. But while this is very noticeable in the earlier pages of the *Decameron* and in occasional passages in which Boccaccio is but little interested, the style loses all artificiality in the heat of narrative, and as the author warms to his subject it becomes direct and highly effective. As compared with modern Italian, his prose has naturally an archaic flavor, often very attractive. Something of this has been kept by the translator in the English of the present volume; and this is well. Boccaccio, for all the timelessness of his genius, must not be made to lose those minor characteristics which mark him for what he is: a man supremely gifted writing in the Middle Ages stories archaic superficially but eternally modern—or rather of all time—in their vividness, their understanding of human nature, and their charm.

WALTER L. BULLOCK.



THE NOBILITY OF GAUTIER, COUNT OF ANTWERP

The Count of Antwerp, being falsely accused, goeth into exile and leaveth his two children in different places in England, whither, after awhile, returning in disguise and finding them in good case, he taketh service as a horseboy in the service of the King of France and being approved innocent, is restored to his former estate.

WHEN the Roman Empire was transferred from the French to the Germans, there arose between the one and the other nation an exceeding great enmity and a grievous and continual war, by reason whereof, as well for the defense of their own country as for the offense of that of others, the King of France and a son of his, with all the power of their realm and of such friends and kinsfolk as they could command, levied a mighty army to go forth upon the foe; and ere they proceeded thereunto,—not to leave the realm without governance,—knowing Gautier, Count of Antwerp, for a noble and discreet gentleman and their very faithful friend and servant, and for that (albeit he was well versed in the art of war) he seemed to them more apt unto things delicate than unto martial toils, they left him vicar general in their stead over all the governance of the realm of France and went on their way. Gautier accordingly addressed himself with both order and discretion to the office committed unto him, still conferring of everything with the queen and her daughter-in-law, whom, for all they were left under his custody and jurisdiction, he honored none the less as his liege ladies and mistresses.

Now this Gautier was exceeding goodly of his body, being maybe forty years old and as agreeable and well-mannered a gentleman as might be; and withal, he was the sprightliest and daintiest cavalier known in those days and he who went most adorned of his person. His countess was dead, leaving him two little children, a boy and a girl, without more, and it befell that, the King of France and his son being at the war aforesaid and Gautier being much at the

court of the aforesaid ladies and speaking often with them of the affairs of the kingdom, the wife of the king's son cast her eyes on him and considering his person and his manners with very great affection, was secretly fired with a fervent love for him. Feeling herself young and knowing him wifeless, she doubted not but her affection for him was strong and keen enough to attract him to her, and that she needed nought but to smile upon him and employ her feminine wiles to attract him and win him to love her. Accordingly, being one day alone and it seeming to her time, she sent for him into her chamber, as though she would discourse with him of other matters.

The count, whose thought was far from that of the lady, betook himself to her without any delay and, at her bidding, seated himself by her side on a couch; then, they being alone together, he twice asked her the occasion for which she had caused him come thither; but she made him no reply. At last, urged by love and grown all vermeil for shame, well nigh in tears and all trembling, with broken speech she thus began to say: "Dearest and sweet friend and my lord, you may easily as a man of understanding apprehend how great is the frailty both of men and of women, and that more, for divers reasons, in one than in another; wherefore, at the hands of a just judge, the same sin in divers kinds and qualities of persons should not in equity receive one same punishment. And who is there will deny that a poor man or a poor woman, whom it behooveth gain with their toil that which is needful for their livelihood, would, an they were stricken with Love's smart and followed after him, be far more blameworthy than a lady who is rich and idle, and to whom nothing is lacking that can flatter her desires? Certes, I believe, no one. For which reason methinketh the things aforesaid [to wit, wealth and leisure and luxurious living] should furnish forth a very great measure of excuse on behalf of her who possesseth them, if, peradventure, she suffer herself lapse into loving, and the having made choice of a lover of worth and discretion should stand for the rest, if she who loveth hath done that. These circumstances being both, to my seeming, in myself (beside several others which should move me

to love, such as my youth and the absence of my husband), it behooveth now that they rise up in my behalf for the defense of my ardent love in your sight, wherein if they avail that which they should avail in the eyes of men of understanding, I pray you afford me counsel and succor in that which I shall ask of you. True is it, that availing not, for the absence of my husband, to withstand the loneliness and chagrin caused me by the temporary absence of my life companion which you may well comprehend and understand is abhorrent to one who has become accustomed to such companionship—and enjoying the commodities and the leisures wherein you see me, I have suffered myself lapse into ensuing Love his pleasures and becoming enamored; the which,—albeit, were it known, I acknowledge it would not be seemly, yet,—being and abiding hidden, I hold well nigh nothing unseemly; more by token that Love hath been insomuch gracious to me that not only hath he not bereft me of due discernment in the choice of a lover, but hath lent me great plenty thereof to that end, showing me yourself worthy to be loved of a lady such as I,—you whom, if my fancy beguile me not, I hold the goodliest, the most agreeable, the sprightliest and the most accomplished cavalier that may be found in all the realm of France; and even as I may say that I find myself without a husband, so likewise are you without a wife. Wherefore, I pray you, by the great love which I bear you, that you deny me not your love in return, but have compassion on my youth, the which, in very deed, consumeth for you, as ice before the fire.”

With these words, her tears welled up in such abundance that, albeit she would fain have proffered him yet other prayers, she had no power to speak farther, but, bowing her face, as if overcome, she let herself fall, weeping, with her head on the count's bosom. The latter, who was a very loyal gentleman, began with gravest reproofs to rebuke so fond a passion and to repel the princess, who would fain have cast herself on his neck, avouching to her with oaths that he had liefer be torn limb from limb than consent unto such an offense against his lord's honor, whether in himself or in another. The lady, hearing this, forthright forgot her

love and kindling into a furious rage, said, "Felon knight that you are, shall I be this wise flouted to my face? Now God forbid, since you would have me die, but I have you put to death or driven from the world!" So saying, she set her hands to her tresses and altogether disordered and tore them; then, rending her raiment at the breast, she fell to crying aloud and saying, "Help! Help! The Count of Antwerp would do me violence." The count, seeing this, misdoubting far more the courtiers' envy than his own conscience and fearful lest, by reason of this same envy, more credence should be given to the lady's malice than to his own innocence, started up and departing the chamber and the palace as quickliest he might, fled to his own house, where, without taking other counsel, he set his children on horseback and mounting himself to horse, made off with them, as most he might, towards Calais.

Meanwhile, many ran to the princess's clamor and seeing her in that plight and hearing [her account of] the cause of her outcry, not only gave credence to her words, but added that the count's gallant bearing and debonair address had long been used by him to win to that end. Accordingly, they ran in a fury to his houses to arrest him, but finding him not, first plundered them all and after razed them to the foundations. The news, in its perverted shape, came presently to the army to the king and his son, who, sore incensed, doomed Gautier and his descendants to perpetual banishment, promising very great guerdons to whoso should deliver him to them alive or dead.

The count, woeful for that by his flight he had, innocent as he was, approved himself guilty, having, without making himself known or being recognized, reached Calais with his children, passed hastily over into England and betook himself in mean apparel to London, wherein ere he entered, with many words he lessoned his two little children, and especially in two things: first, that they should brook with patience the poor estate, whereunto, without their fault, fortune had brought them, together with himself,—and after, that with all wariness they should keep themselves from ever discovering unto any whence or whose children they were, as they held life dear. The boy, Louis by name,

who was some nine and the girl, who was called Violante and was some seven years old, both, as far as their tender age comported, very well apprehended their father's lessons and showed it thereafter by deed. That this might be the better done, he deemed it well to change their names; wherefore he named the boy Perrot and the girl Jeannette and all three, entering London, meanly clad, addressed themselves to go about asking alms, like as we see yonder French vagabonds do.

They being on this account one morning at a church door, it chanced that a certain great lady, the wife of one of the King's marshals of England, coming forth of the church, saw the count and his two little ones asking alms and questioned him whence he was and if the children were his, to which he replied that he was from Picardy and that, by reason of the misfeasance of a rakehelly elder son of his, it had behooved him depart the country with these two, who were his. The lady, who was pitiful, cast her eyes on the girl and being much taken with her, for that she was handsome, well-mannered and engaging, said, "Honest man, an thou be content to leave thy daughter with me, I will willingly take her, for that she hath a good favor, and if she prove an honest woman, I will in due time marry her on such wise that she shall fare well." This offer was very pleasing to the count, who promptly answered, "Yes," and with tears gave up the girl to the lady, urgently commending her to her care.

Having thus disposed of his daughter, well knowing to whom, he resolved to abide there no longer and accordingly, begging his way across the island, came, not without sore fatigue, as one who was unused to go afoot, into Wales. Here dwelt another of the King's marshals, who held great state and entertained a numerous household, and to his court both the count and his son whiles much resorted to get food. Certain sons of the said marshal and other gentlemen's children being there engaged in such boyish exercises as running and leaping, Perrot began to mingle with them and do as dextrously as any of the rest, or more so, each feat that was practiced among them. The marshal, chancing whiles to see this and being much taken with the manners

and fashion of the boy, asked who he was and was told that he was the son of a poor man who came there bytimes for alms; whereupon he caused require him of the count, and the latter, who indeed besought God of nought else, freely resigned the boy to him, grievous as it was to him to be parted from him. Having thus provided his son and daughter, he determined to abide no longer in England and passing over into Ireland, made his way, as best he might, to Stamford, where he took service with a knight belonging to an earl of the country, doing all such things as pertain unto a lackey or a horseboy, and there, without being known of any, he abode a great while in unease and travail galore.

Meanwhile Violante, called Jeannette, went waxing with the gentlewoman in London in years and person and beauty and was in such favor both with the lady and her husband and with every other of the house and whoso else knew her, that it was a marvelous thing to see; nor was there any who noted her manners and fashions but avouched her worthy of every greatest good and honor. Wherefore the noble lady who had received her from her father, without having ever availed to learn who he was, otherwise than as she had heard from himself, was purposed to marry her honorably according to that condition whereof she deemed her. But God, who is a just observer of folk's deserts, knowing her to be of noble birth and to bear, without fault, the penalty of another's sin, ordained otherwise, and fain must we believe that He of His benignity permitted that which came to pass, to the end that the gentle damsel might not fall into the hands of a man of low estate.

The noble lady with whom Jeannette dwelt had of her husband only one son, whom both she and his father loved with an exceeding love, both for that he was their child and that he deserved it by reason of his worth and virtues. He, being some six years older than Jeannette and seeing her exceeding fair and graceful, became so sore enamored of her that he saw nought beyond her; yet, for that he deemed her to be of mean extraction, not only dared he not demand her of his father and mother to wife, but, fearing to be blamed for having set himself to love unworthily, he held his love, as most he might, hidden; wherefore it tormented him far

more than if he had discovered it; and thus it came to pass that, for excess of chagrin, he fell sick and that grievously. Divers physicians were called in to medicine him, who, having noted one and another symptom of his case and being nevertheless unable to discover what ailed him, all with one accord despaired of his recovery; whereat the young man's father and mother suffered dolor and melancholy so great that greater might not be brooked, and many a time, with piteous prayers, they questioned him of the cause of his malady, whereto or sighs he gave for answer or replied that he felt himself all wasting away.

It chanced one day that, what while a doctor, young enough, but exceeding deeply versed in science, sat by him and held him by the arm in that part where leaches use to seek the pulse, Jeannette, who, of regard for his mother, tended him solicitously, entered, on some occasion or another, the chamber where the young man lay. When the latter saw her, without word said or gesture made, he felt the amorous ardor redouble in his heart, wherefore his pulse began to beat stronglier than of wont; the which the leach incontinent noted and marveling, abode still to see how long this should last. As soon as Jeannette left the chamber, the beating abated, wherefore it seemed to the physician he had gotten impartment of the cause of the young man's ailment, and after waiting awhile, he let call Jeannette to him, as he would question her of somewhat, still holding the sick man by the arm. She came to him incontinent and no sooner did she enter than the beating of the youth's pulse returned, and she being gone again, ceased. Thereupon, it seeming to the physician that he had full enough assurance, he rose and taking the young man's father and mother apart, said to them, "The healing of your son is not in the succor of physicians, but abideth in the hands of Jeannette, whom, as I have by sure signs manifestly recognized, the young man ardently loveth, albeit, for all I can see, she is unaware thereof. You know now what you have to do, if his life be dear to you."

The gentleman and his lady, hearing this, were well pleased, inasmuch as some means was found for his recovery, albeit it irked them sore that the means in ques-

tion should be that whereof they misdoubted them, to wit, that they should give Jeannette to their son to wife. Accordingly, the physician being gone, they went in to the sick man and the lady bespoke him thus: "Son mine, I could never have believed that thou wouldst keep from me any desire of thine, especially seeing thyself pine away for lack thereof; for that thou shouldst have been and shouldst be assured that there is nought I can for thy contentment, were it even less than seemly, which I would not do as for myself. But, since thou hast e'en done this, God the Lord hath been more pitiful over thee than thou thyself and that thou mayst not die of this sickness, hath shown me the cause of thine ill, which is no otherwhat than excess of love for some damsel or other, whoever she may be; and this, indeed, thou needst not have thought shame to discover, for that thine age requireth it, and wert thou not enamored, I should hold thee of very little account. Wherefore, my son, dissemble not with me, but in all security discover to me thine every desire and put away from thee the melancholy and the thought-taking which be upon thee and from which proceedeth this thy sickness and take comfort and be assured that there is nothing of that which thou mayst impose on me for thy satisfaction but I will do it to the best of my power, as she who loveth thee more than her life. Banish shamefastness and fearfulness and tell me if I can do aught to further thy passion; and if thou find me not diligent therein or if I bring it not to effect for thee, account me the cruellest mother that ever bore son."

The young man, hearing his mother's words, was at first abashed, but presently, bethinking himself that none was better able than she to satisfy his wishes, he put away shamefastness and said thus to her: "Madam, nothing hath wrought so effectually with me to keep my love hidden as my having noted of most folk that, once they are grown in years, they choose not to remember them of having themselves been young. But, since in this I find you reasonable, not only will I not deny that to be true which you say you have observed, but I will, to boot, discover to you of whom [I am enamored], on condition that you will, to the best of your power, give effect to your promise; and thus may you

have me whole again." Whereto the lady (trusting overmuch in that which was not to come to pass for her on such wise as she deemed in herself) answered freely that he might in all assurance discover to her his every desire, for that she would without any delay address herself to contrive that he should have his pleasure. "Madam," then said the youth, "the exceeding beauty and commendable fashions of our Jeannette and my unableness to make her even sensible, still less to move her to pity, of my love and the having never dared to discover it unto any have brought me whereas you see me; and if that which you have promised me come not, one way or another, to pass, you may be assured that my life will be brief."

The lady, to whom it appeared more a time for comfort than for reproof, said, smilingly, "Alack, my son, hast thou then for this suffered thyself to languish thus? Take comfort and leave me do, once thou shalt be recovered." The youth, full of good hope, in a very short time showed signs of great amendment, whereat the lady, being much rejoiced, began to cast about how she might perform that which she had promised him. Accordingly, calling Jeannette to her one day, she asked her very civilly, as by way of jest, if she had a lover; whereupon she waxed all red and answered, "Madam, it concerneth not neither were it seemly in a poor damsel like myself, banished from house and home and abiding in others' service, to think of love." Quoth the lady, "An you have no lover, we mean to give you one, in whom you may rejoice and live merry and have more delight of your beauty, for it behooveth not that so handsome a girl as you are abide without a lover." To this Jeannette made answer, "Madam, you took me from my father's poverty and have reared me as a daughter, wherefore it behooveth me do your every pleasure; but in this I will nowise comply with you, therein methinketh I do well. If it please you give me a husband, him do I purpose to love, but none other; for that, since of the inheritance of my ancestors nought is left me save only honor, this latter I mean to keep and preserve as long as life shall endure me."

This speech seemed to the lady very contrary to that whereto she thought to come for the keeping of her promise

to her son,—albeit, like a discreet woman as she was, she inwardly much commended the damsel therefor,—and she said, “How now, Jeannette? If our lord the king, who is a young cavalier, as thou art a very fair damsel, would fain have some easance of thy love, wouldst thou deny it to him?” Whereto she answered forthright, “The king might do me violence, but of my consent he should never avail to have aught of me save what was honorable.” The lady, seeing how she was minded, left parleying with her and bethought herself to put her to the proof; wherefore she told her son that, whenas he should be recovered, she would contrive so that he might sometime when he was alone with her have opportunity to make love to her, saying that it appeared to her unseemly that she should, procuress-wise, plead for her son and solicit her own maid.

With this the young man was nowise content and presently waxed grievously worse, which when his mother saw, she opened her mind to Jeannette, but, finding her more constant than ever, recounted what she had done to her husband, and he and she resolved of one accord, grievous though it seemed to them, to give her to him to wife, choosing rather to have their son alive with a wife unsorted to his quality than dead without any; and so, after much parley, they did; whereat Jeannette was exceeding content and with a devout heart rendered thanks to God, who had not forgotten her; but for all that she never avouched herself other than the daughter of a Picard. As for the young man, he presently recovered and celebrating his nuptials, the gladdest man alive, proceeded to lead a merry life with his bride.

Meanwhile, Perrot, who had been left in Wales with the King of England’s marshal, waxed likewise in favor with his lord and grew up very goodly of his person and doughty as any man in the island, insomuch that neither in tourneying nor joisting nor in any other act of arms was there any in the land who could cope with him; wherefore he was everywhere known and famous under the name of Perrot the Picard. And even as God had not forgotten his sister, so on like wise He showed that He had him also in mind; for that a pestilential sickness, being come into those parts, carried off well nigh half the people thereof, besides that

most part of those who survived fled for fear into other lands; wherefore the whole country appeared desert. In this mortality, the marshal his lord and his lady and only son, together with many others, brothers and nephews and kinsmen, all died, nor was any left of all his house save a daughter, just husband-ripe, and Perrot, with sundry other serving folk. The pestilence being somewhat abated, the young lady, with the approof and by the counsel of some few gentlemen of the country left alive, took Perrot, for that he was a man of worth and prowess, to husband and made him lord of all that had fallen to her inheritance; nor was it long ere the King of England, hearing the marshal to be dead and knowing the worth of Perrot the Picard, substituted him in the dead man's room and made him his marshal. This, in brief, is what came of the two innocent children of the Count of Antwerp, left by him for lost.

Eighteen years were now passed since the count's flight from Paris, when, as he abode in Ireland, having suffered many things in a very sorry way of life, there took him a desire to learn, an he might, what was come of his children. Wherefore, seeing himself altogether changed of favor from that which he was wont to be and feeling himself, for long exercise, grown more robust of person than he had been when young and abiding in ease and idlesse, he took leave of him with whom he had so long abidden and came, poor and ill enough in case, to England. Thence he betook himself whereas he had left Perrot and found him a marshal and a great lord and saw him robust and goodly of person; the which was mighty pleasing unto him, but he would not make himself known to him till he should have learned how it was with Jeannette. Accordingly, he set out and stayed not till he came to London, where, cautiously inquiring of the lady with whom he had left his daughter and of her condition, he found Jeannette married to her son, which greatly rejoiced him and he counted all his past adversity a little thing, since he had found his children again alive and in good case.

Then, desirous of seeing Jeannette, he began, beggarwise, to haunt the neighborhood of her house, where one day Jamy Lamiens, (for so was Jeannette's husband called),

espying him and having compassion on him, for that he saw him old and poor, bade one of his servants bring him in and give him to eat for the love of God, which the man readily did. Now Jeannette had had several children by Jamy, whereof the eldest was no more than eight years old, and they were the handsomest and sprightliest children in the world. When they saw the count eat, they came one and all about him and began to caress him, as if, moved by some occult virtue, they divined him to be their grandfather. He, knowing them for his grandchildren, fell to fondling and making much of them, wherefore the children would not leave him, albeit he who had charge of their governance called them. Jeannette, hearing this, issued forth of a chamber therenigh and coming whereas the count was, chid them amain and threatened to beat them, an they did not what their governor willed. The children began to weep and say that they would fain abide with that honest man, who loved them better than their governor, whereat both the lady and the count laughed. Now the latter had risen, nowise as a father, but as a poor man, to do honor to his daughter, as to a mistress, and seeing her, felt a marvelous pleasure at his heart. But she nor then nor after knew him any whit, for that he was beyond measure changed from what he was used to be, being grown old and hoar and bearded and lean and swart, and appeared altogether another man than the count.

The lady then, seeing that the children were unwilling to leave him and wept, when she would have them go away, bade their governor let them be awhile and the children thus being with the good man, it chanced that Jamy's father returned and heard from their governor what had passed, whereupon quoth the marshal, who held Jeannette in despise, "Let them be, God give them ill-luck! They do but hark back to that whence they sprang. They come by their mother of a vagabond and therefore it is no wonder if they are fain to herd with vagabonds." The count heard these words and was mightily chagrined thereat; nevertheless, he shrugged his shoulders and put up with the affront, even as he had put up with many others. Jamy, hearing how the children had welcomed the honest man, to wit, the count,

albeit it misliked him, nevertheless so loved them that, rather than see them weep, he commanded that, if the good man chose to abide there in any capacity, he should be received into his service. The count answered that he would gladly abide there, but that he knew not to do aught other than tend horses, whereto he had been used all his lifetime. A horse was accordingly assigned to him and when he had cared for it, he busied himself with making sport for the children.

Whilst fortune handled the Count of Antwerp and his children on such wise as hath been set out, it befell that the King of France, after many truces made with the Germans, died and his son, whose wife she through whom the count had been banished, was crowned in his place; and no sooner was the current truce expired than he again began a very fierce war. To his aid the King of England, as a new-made kinsman, dispatched much people, under the commandment of Perrot his marshal and Jamy Lamiens, son of the other marshal, and with them went the good man, to wit, the count, who, without being recognized of any, abode a pretty while with the army in the guise of a horseboy, and there, like a man of mettle as he was, wrought good galore, more than was required of him, both with counsels and with deeds.

During the war, it came to pass that the Queen of France fell grievously sick and feeling herself nigh unto death, contrite for all her sins, confessed herself unto the Archbishop of Rouen, who was held of all a very holy and good man. Amongst her other sins, she related to him that which the Count of Antwerp had most wrongfully suffered through her; nor was she content to tell it to him alone, nay, but before many other men of worth she recounted all as it had passed, beseeching them so to do with the king that the count, an he were on life, or, if not, one of his children, should be restored to his estate; after which she lingered not long, but, departing this life, was honorably buried. Her confession, being reported to the king, moved him, after he had heaved divers sighs of regret for the wrong done to the nobleman, to let cry throughout all the army and in many other parts, that whoso should give him news of the Count of Antwerp or of either of his children should for each be

wonder-well guerdoned of him, for that he held him, upon the queen's confession, innocent of that for which he had gone into exile and was minded to restore him to his first estate and more.

The count, in his guise of a horseboy, hearing this and being assured that it was the truth, betook himself forthright to Jamy Lamiens and prayed him go with him to Perrot, for that he had a mind to discover to them that which the king went seeking. All three being then met together, quoth the count to Perrot, who had it already in mind to discover himself, "Perrot, Jamy here hath thy sister to wife nor ever had any dowry with her; wherefore, that thy sister may not go undowered, I purpose that he and none other shall, by making thee known as the son of the Count of Antwerp, have this great reward that the king promiseth for thee and for Violante, thy sister and his wife, and myself, who am the Count of Antwerp and your father." Perrot, hearing this and looking steadfastly upon him, presently knew him and cast himself, weeping, at his feet and embraced him, saying, "Father mine, you are dearly welcome." Jamy, hearing first what the count said and after seeing what Perrot did, was overcome at once with such wonderment and such gladness that he scarce knew what he should do. However, after awhile, giving credence to the former's speech and sore ashamed for the injurious words he had whiles used to the hostler-count, he let himself fall, weeping, at his feet and humbly besought him pardon of every past affront, the which the count, having raised him to his feet, graciously accorded him.

Then, after they had all three discoursed awhile of each one's various adventures and wept and rejoiced together amain, Perrot and Jamy would have re-clad the count, who would on nowise suffer it, but willed that Jamy, having first assured himself of the promised guerdon, should, the more to shame the king, present him to the latter in that his then plight and in his groom's habit. Accordingly, Jamy, followed by the count and Perrot, presented himself before the king, and offered, provided he would guerdon him according to the proclamation made, to produce to him the count and his children. The king promptly let bring for all three

a guerdon marvelous in Jamy's eyes and commanded that he should be free to carry it off, whenas he should in very deed produce the count and his children, as he promised. Jamy, then, turning himself about and putting forward the count his horseboy and Perrot, said, "My lord, here be the father and the son; the daughter, who is my wife and who is not here, with God's aid you shall soon see."

The king, hearing this, looked at the count and albeit he was sore changed from that which he was used to be, yet, after he had awhile considered him, he knew him and well nigh with tears in his eyes raised him—for that he was on his knees before him—to his feet and kissed and embraced him. Perrot, also, he graciously received and commanded that the count should incontinent be furnished anew with clothes and servants and horses and harness, according as his quality required, which was straightway done. Moreover, he entreated Jamy with exceeding honor and would fain know every particular of his past adventures. Then, Jamy being about to receive the magnificent guerdons appointed him for having discovered the count and his children, the former said to him, "Take these of the munificence of our lord the king and remember to tell thy father that thy children, his grandchildren and mine, are not by their mother born of a vagabond." Jamy, accordingly, took the gifts and sent for his wife and mother to Paris, whither came also Perrot's wife; and there they all foregathered in the utmost joyance with the count, whom the king had reinstated in all his good and made greater than he ever was. Then all, with Gautier's leave, returned to their several homes and he until his death abode in Paris more worshipfully than ever.



THE MONK, THE GIRL AND THE ABBOT

A monk, having falling into a sin deserving of very grievous punishment, adroitly reproaching the same fault to his abbot, quitted himself of the penalty.

THERE was in Lunigiana, a country not very far hence, a monastery whilere more abounding in sanctity and monks than it is nowadays, and therein, among others was a young monk, whose vigor and lustiness neither fasts nor vigils availed to mortify. It chanced one day, towards noontide when all the other monks slept, that, as he went all alone round about the convent, which stood in a very solitary place, he espied a very well-favored lass, belike some husbandman's daughter of the country, who went about the fields culling certain herbs, and no sooner had he set eyes on her than he was violently assailed by carnal appetite. Wherefore, accosting her, he entered into parley with her and so led on from one thing to another that he came to an accord with her and brought her to his cell, unperceived of any; but whilst, carried away by overmuch ardor, he disported himself with her less cautiously than was prudent, it chanced that the abbot arose from sleep and softly passing by the monk's cell, heard the racket that the twain made together; whereupon he came stealthily up to the door to listen, that he might the better recognize the voices, and manifestly perceiving that there was a woman in the cell, was at first minded to cause open to him, but after bethought himself to hold another course in the matter and returning to his chamber, awaited the monk's coming forth.

The latter, all taken up as he was with the wench and his exceeding pleasure and delight in her company, was none the less on his guard and him seeming he heard some scuffling of feet in the dormitory, he set his eye to a crevice and plainly saw the abbot stand hearkening unto him; whereby he understood but too well that the latter must have gotten wind of the wench's presence in his cell and knowing that sore punishment would ensue to him thereof, he was beyond

measure chagrined. However, without discovering aught of his concern to the girl, he hastily revolved many things in himself, seeking to find some means of escape, and presently hit upon a rare device, which went straight to the mark he aimed at. Accordingly, making a show of thinking he had abidden long enough with the damsel, he said to her, "I must go cast about for a means how thou mayst win forth hence, without being seen; wherefore do thou abide quietly until my return."

Then, going forth and locking the cell door on her, he betook himself straight to the abbot's chamber and presenting him with the key, according as each monk did, whenas he went abroad, said to him, with a good countenance, "Sir, I was unable to make an end this morning of bringing off all the faggots I had cut; wherefore with your leave I will presently go to the wood and fetch them away." The abbot, deeming the monk unaware that he had been seen of him, was glad of such an opportunity to inform himself more fully of the offence committed by him and accordingly took the key and gave him the leave he sought. Then, as soon as he saw him gone, he fell to considering which he should rather do, whether open his cell in the presence of all the other monks and cause them see his default, so they might after have no occasion to murmur against himself, whenas he should punish the offender, or seek first to learn from the girl herself how the thing had passed; and be-
thinking himself that she might perchance be the wife or daughter of such a man that he would be loath to have done her the shame of showing her to all the monks, he determined first to see her and after come to a conclusion; wherefore, betaking himself to the cell, he opened it and entering, shut the door after him.

The girl, seeing the abbot enter, was all aghast and fell aweeping for fear of shame; but my lord abbot, casting his eyes upon her and seeing her young and handsome, old as he was, suddenly felt the pricks of the flesh no less importunate than his young monk had done and fell a-saying in himself, "Marry, why should I not take somewhat of pleasure, whenas I may, more by token that displeasance and annoy are still at hand, whenever I have a mind to

them? This is a handsome wench and is here unknown of any in the world. If I can bring her to do my pleasure, I know not why I should not do it. Who will know it? No one will ever know it and a sin that's hidden is half forgiven. Maybe this chance will never occur again. I hold it great sense to avail ourselves of a good, whenas God the Lord sendeth us thereof."

So saying and having altogether changed purpose from that wherewith he came, he drew near to the girl and began gently to comfort her, praying her not to weep, and passing from one word to another, he ended by discovering to her his desire. The girl, who was neither iron nor adamant, readily enough lent herself to the pleasure of the abbot, who, after he had clipped and kissed her again and again, mounted upon the monk's pallet and having belike regard to the grave burden of his dignity and the girl's tender age and fearful of irking her for overmuch heaviness, bestrode not her breast, but set her upon his own and so a great while disported himself with her.

Meanwhile, the monk, who had only made believe to go to the wood and had hidden himself in the dormitory, was altogether reassured, whenas he saw the abbot enter his cell alone, doubting not but his device should have effect, and when he saw him lock the door from within, he held it for certain. Accordingly, coming forth of his hiding-place, he stealthily betook himself to a crevice, through which he both heard and saw all that the abbot did and said. When it seemed to the latter that he had tarried long enough with the damsel, he locked her in the cell and returned to his own chamber, whence, after awhile, he heard the monk stirring and deeming him returned from the wood, thought to rebuke him severely and cast him into prison, so himself might alone possess the prey he had gotten; wherefore, sending for him, he very grievously rebuked him and with a stern countenance and commanded that he should be put in prison.

The monk very readily answered, "Sir, I have not yet pertained long enough to the order of St. Benedict to have been able to learn every particular thereof, and you had not yet shown me that monks should make of women a

means of mortification, as of fasts and vigils; but, now that you have shown it me, I promise you, so you will pardon me this default, never again to offend therein, but still to do as I have seen you do." The abbot, who was a quick-witted man, readily understood that the monk not only knew more than himself, but had seen what he did; wherefore, his conscience pricking him for his own default, he was ashamed to inflict on the monk a punishment which he himself had merited even as he. Accordingly, pardoning him and charging him keep silence of that which he had seen, they privily put the girl out of doors and it is to be believed that they caused her return thither more than once thereafterward.



THE STORY OF THREE RINGS

Melchizedek the Jew, with a story of three rings, escapeth a parlous snare set for him by Saladin.

SALADIN¹—whose valor was such that not only from a man of little account it made him Soldan of Babylon, but gained him many victories over kings Saracen and Christian,—having in divers wars and in the exercise of his extraordinary munificences expended his whole treasure and having an urgent occasion for a good sum of money nor seeing whence he might avail to have it as promptly as it behooved him, called to mind a rich Jew, by name Melchizedek, who lent at usance in Alexandria, and bethought himself that this latter had the wherewithal to oblige him, and he would; but he was so miserly that he would never have done it of his free-will and Saladin was loath to use force with him; wherefore, need constraining him, he set his every wit awork to find a means how the Jew might be brought to serve him in this and presently concluded to do him a violence colored by some show of reason.²

Accordingly he sent for Melchizedek and receiving him familiarly, seated him by himself, then said to him: "Honest man, I have understood from divers persons that thou art a very learned man and deeply versed in matters of divinity; wherefore I would fain know of thee whether of the three Laws thou reputest the true, the Jewish, the Saracen or the Christian." The Jew, who was in truth a man of learning and understanding, perceived but too well that Saladin looked to entrap him in words, so he might fasten a quarrel on him, and bethought himself that he could not praise any of the three more than the others without giving him the occasion he sought. Accordingly, sharpening his wits, as became one who felt himself in need of an answer by which he might not be taken at a vantage, there speedily occurred to him that which it behooved him reply and he said, "My lord, the question you propound to me is a nice one and to acquaint you with that which I think of the

matter, it behooveth me tell you a little story, which you shall hear.

“An I mistake not, I mind me to have many a time heard tell that there was once a great man and a rich, who among other very precious jewels in his treasury, had a very goodly and costly ring, whereunto being minded, for its worth and beauty, to do honor and wishing to leave it in perpetuity to his descendants, he declared that whichsoever of his sons should, at his death, be found in possession thereof, by his bequest unto him, should be recognized as his heir and be held of all the others in honor and reverence as chief and head. He to whom the ring was left by him held a like course with his own descendants and did even as his father had done. In brief, the ring passed from hand to hand, through many generations, and came at last into the possession of a man who had three goodly and virtuous sons all very obedient to their father, wherefore he loved them all three alike. The young men, knowing the usance of the ring, each for himself desiring to be the most honored among his folk, as best he might, besought his father, who was now an old man, to leave him the ring, whenas he came to die. The worthy man, who loved them alike and knew not himself how to choose to which he had liefer leave the ring, besought himself, having promised it to each, to seek to satisfy all three and privily let make by a good craftsman other two rings, which were so like unto the first that he himself scarce knew which was the true. When he came to die, he secretly gave each one of his sons his ring, wherefore each of them, seeking, after their father’s death, to occupy the inheritance and the honor and denying it to the others, produced his ring, in witness of his right, and the three rings being found so like unto one another that the true might not be known, the question which was the father’s very heir abode pending and yet pendeth. And so say I to you, my lord, of the three Laws to the three peoples given of God the Father, whereof you question me; each people deemeth itself to have His inheritance: His true Law and His commandments; but of which in very deed hath them, even as of the rings, the question yet pendeth.”

Saladin perceived that the Jew had excellently well contrived to escape the snare which he had spread before his feet; wherefore he concluded to discover to him his need and see if he were willing to serve him; and so accordingly he did, confessing to him that which he had it in mind to do, had he not answered him on such discreet wise. The Jew freely furnished him with all that he required, and the Soldan after satisfied him in full; moreover, he gave him very great gifts and still had him to friend and maintained him about his own person in high and honorable estate.



GRISELDA

The Marquess of Saluzzo, constrained by the prayers of his vassals to marry, but determined to do it after his own fashion, taketh to wife the daughter of a peasant and hath of her two children, whom he maketh believe to her to put to death; after which, feigning to be grown weary of her and to have taken another wife, he letteth bring his own daughter home to his house, as she were his new bride, and turneth his wife away in her shift; but, finding her patient under everything, he fetcheth her home again, dearer than ever, and showing her her children grown great, honoreth and letteth honor her as marchioness.

IT is now a great while agoe since the chief of the house among the Marquesses of Saluzzo³ was a youth called Gualtieri, who, having neither wife nor children, spent his time in nought but hunting and hawking nor had any thought of taking a wife nor of having children; wherein he deserved to be reputed very wise. The thing, however, not pleasing his vassals, they besought him many times to take a wife, so he might not abide without an heir nor they without a lord, and offered themselves to find him one of such a fashion and born of such parents that good hopes might be had of her and he be well content with her; whereto he answered, "My friends, you constrain me unto that which I was altogether resolved never to do, considering how hard a thing it is to find a wife whose fashions sort well with one's own humor and how great an abundance there is of the contrary sort and how dour a life is his who happeneth upon a woman not well suited unto him. To say that you think, by the manners and fashions of the parents, to know the daughters wherefrom you argue to give me a wife such as will please me is a folly, since I know not whence you may avail to know their fathers nor yet the secrets of their mothers; and even did you know them, daughters are often unlike their parents. However, since it e'en pleaseth you to bind me in these chains, I am content to do your desire; but, that I may not have occasion to complain of other than myself, if it prove ill done, I mean

to find a wife for myself, certifying you that, whomsoever I may take me, if she be not honored of you as your lady and mistress, you shall prove, to your cost, how much it irketh me to have at your entreaty taken a wife against mine own will."

The good honest men replied that they were content, so he would but bring himself to take a wife. Now the fashions of a poor girl, who was of a village near to his house, had long pleased Gualtieri, and himseeming she was fair enough, he judged that he might lead a very comfortable life with her; wherefore, without seeking farther, he determined to marry her and sending for her father, who was a very poor man, agreed with him to take her to wife. This done, he assembled all his friends of the country round and said to them, "My friends, it hath pleased and pleaseth you that I should dispose me to take a wife and I have resigned myself thereto, more to complease you than of any desire I have for marriage. You know what you promised me, to wit, that you would be content with and honor as your lady and mistress her whom I should take, whosoever she might be; wherefore the time is come when I am to keep my promise to you and when I would have you keep yours to me. I have found a damsel after mine own heart and purpose within some few days hence to marry her and bring her home to my house; wherefore do you bethink yourselves how the bridefeast may be a goodly one and how you may receive her with honor, on such wise that I may avouch myself contented of your promise, even as you will have cause to be of mine." The good folk all answered joyfully that this liked them well and that, be she who he would, they would hold her for lady and mistress and honor her as such in all things; after which they all addressed themselves to hold fair and high and glad festival and on like wise did Gualtieri, who let make ready very great and goodly nuptials and bade thereto many his friends and kinsfolk and great gentlemen and others of the neighborhood. Moreover, he let cut and fashion store of rich and goodly apparel, after the measure of a damsel who seemed to him like of her person to the young woman he was purposed

to marry, and provided also rings and girdles and a rich and goodly crown and all that behooveth unto a bride.

The day come that he had appointed for the nuptials, Gualtieri towards half tierce mounted to horse, he and all those who were come to do him honor, and having ordered everything needful, "Gentlemen," quoth he, "it is time to go fetch the bride." Then, setting out with all his company, he rode to the village and betaking himself to the house of the girl's father, found her returning in great haste with water from the spring, so she might after go with other women to see Gualtieri's bride come. When the marquess saw her, he called her by her name, to wit, Griselda, and asked her where her father was; to which she answered bashfully, "My lord, he is within the house." Thereupon Gualtieri dismounted and bidding all await him, entered the poor house alone, where he found her father, whose name was Giannucolo, and said to him, "I am come to marry Griselda, but first I would fain know of her somewhat in thy presence." Accordingly, he asked her if, an he took her to wife, she would still study to please him, nor take umbrage at aught that he should do or say, and if she would be obedient, and many other like things, to all of which she answered ay; whereupon Gualtieri, taking her by the hand, led her forth and in the presence of all his company and of every one else, let strip her naked. Then, sending for the garments which he had let make, he caused forthright clothe and shoe her and would have her set the crown on her hair, all tumbled as it was; after which, all marveling at this, he said, "Gentlemen, this is she who I purpose shall be my wife, and she will have me to husband." Then, turning to her, where she stood, all shamefast and confounded, he said to her, "Griselda, wilt thou have me to thy husband?" To which she answered, "Ay, my lord." Quoth he, "And I will have thee to my wife;" and espoused her in the presence of all. Then, mounting her on a palfrey, he carried her, honorably accompanied, to his mansion, where the nuptials were celebrated with the utmost splendor and rejoicing, no otherwise than as he had taken to wife the king's daughter of France.

The young wife seemed to have, together with her clothes, changed her mind and her manners. She was, as we have already said, goodly of person and countenance, and even as she was fair, on like wise she became so engaging, so pleasant and so well-mannered that she seemed rather to have been the child of some noble gentleman than the daughter of Giannucolo and a tender of sheep; whereof she made every one marvel who had known her aforetime. Moreover, she was so obedient to her husband and so diligent in his service that he accounted himself the happiest and best contented man in the world; and on like wise she bore herself with such graciousness and such loving-kindness towards her husband's subjects that there was none of them but loved and honored her with his whole heart, praying all for her welfare and prosperity and advancement; and whereas they were used to say that Gualtieri had done as one of little wit to take her to wife, they now with one accord declared that he was the sagest and best-advised man alive, for that none other than he might ever have availed to know her high worth, hidden as it was under poor clothes and a rustic habit. Brief, it was no great while ere she knew so to do that, not only in her husband's marquise, but everywhere else, she made folk talk of her virtues and her welldoing and turned to the contrary whatsoever had been said against her husband on her account, whenas he married her.

She had not long abidden with Gualtieri ere she conceived with child and in due time bore a daughter, whereat he rejoiced greatly. But, a little after, a new thought having entered his mind, to wit, to seek, by dint of long tribulation and things unendurable, to make trial of her patience, he first goaded her with words, feigning himself troubled and saying that his vassals were exceeding ill content with her, by reason of her mean extraction, especially since they saw that she bore children, and that they did nothing but murmur, being sore chagrined for the birth of her daughter. The lady, hearing this, replied, without anywise changing countenance or showing the least distemperature, "My lord, do with me that which thou deemest will be most for thine honor and solace, for

that I shall be content with all, knowing, as I do, that I am of less account than they and that I was unworthy of this dignity to which thou hast advanced me of thy courtesy." This reply was mighty agreeable to Gualtieri, for that he saw she was not uplifted into aught of pridefulness for any honor that himself or others had done her; but, a little after, having in general terms told her that his vassals could not brook this girl that had been born of her, he sent to her a servingman of his whom he had lessoned and who said to her with a very woeful countenance, "Madam, an I would not die, needs must I do that which my lord commandeth me. He hath bidden me take this your daughter and . . ." And said no more. The lady, hearing this and seeing the servant's aspect and remembering her of her husband's words, concluded that he had enjoined him put the child to death; whereupon, without changing countenance, albeit she felt a sore anguish at heart, she straightway took her from the cradle and having kissed and blessed her, laid her in the servant's arms, saying, "Take her and punctually do that which thy lord hath enjoined thee; but leave her not to be devoured of the beasts and birds, except he command it thee." The servant took the child and reported that which the lady had said to Gualtieri, who marveled at her constancy and dispatched him with the child to a kinswoman of his at Bologna, praying her to bring her up and rear her diligently, without ever saying whose daughter she was.

In course of time the lady again conceived and in due season bore a male child, to her husband's great joy; but, that which he had already done sufficing him not, he addressed himself to probe her to the quick with a yet sorer stroke and accordingly said to her one day with a troubled air, "Wife, since thou hast borne this male child, I have nowise been able to live in peace with these my people, so sore do they murmur that a grandson of Giannucolo should become their lord after me; wherefore I misdoubt me, an I would not be driven forth of my domains, it will behoove me do in this case that which I did otherwhen and ultimately put thee away and take another wife." The lady gave ear to him with a patient mind nor answered

otherwhat than, "My lord, study to content thyself and to satisfy thy pleasure and have no thought of me, for that nothing is dear to me save in so much as I see it please thee." Not many days after, Gualtieri sent for the son even as he had sent for the daughter, and making a like show of having him put to death, dispatched him to Bologna, there to be brought up, even as he had done with the girl; but the lady made no other countenance nor other words thereof than she had done of the girl; whereat Gualtieri marveled sore and affirmed in himself that no other woman could have availed to do this that she did; and had he not seen her tender her children with the utmost fondness, what while it pleased him, he had believed that she did this because she recked no more of them; whereas in effect he knew that she did it of her discretion. His vassals, believing that he had caused put the children to death, blamed him sore, accounting him a barbarous man, and had the utmost compassion of his wife, who never answered otherwhat to the ladies who condoled with her for her children thus slain, than that that which pleased him thereof who had begotten them pleased her also.

At last, several years passed since the birth of the girl, Gualtieri, deeming it time to make the supreme trial of her endurance, declared, in the presence of his people, that he could no longer endure to have Griselda to wife and that he perceived that he had done ill and boyishly in taking her, wherefore he purposed, as far as in him lay, to make interest with the Pope to grant him a dispensation, so he might put her away and take another wife. For this he was roundly taken to task by many men of worth, but answered them nothing save that needs must it be so. The lady, hearing these things and herseeming she must look to return to her father's house and maybe tend sheep again as she had done aforetime, what while she saw another woman in possession of him to whom she willed all her weal, sorrowed sore in herself; but yet, even as she had borne the other affronts of fortune, so with a firm countenance she addressed herself to bear this also. Gualtieri no great while after let come to him from Rome counterfeit letters of dispensation and gave his vassals to believe that the Pope

had thereby licensed him to take another wife and leave Griselda; then, sending for the latter, he said to her, in presence of many, "Wife, by concession made me of this Pope, I am free to take another wife and put thee away, and accordingly, for that mine ancestors have been great gentlemen and lords of this country, whilst thine have still been husbandmen, I mean that thou be no more my wife, but that thou return to Giannucolo his house with the dowry which thou broughtest me, and I will after bring hither another wife, for that I have found one more sorted to myself."

The lady, hearing this, contained her tears, contrary to the nature of woman, though not without great unease, and answered, "My lord, I ever knew my mean estate to be nowise sortable with your nobility, and for that which I have been with you I have still confessed myself indebted to you and to God, nor have I ever made nor held it mine, as given to me, but have still accounted it but as a loan. It pleaseth you to require it again and it must and doth please me to restore it to you. Here is your ring wherewith you espoused me; take it. You bid me carry away with me that dowry which I brought hither, which to do you will need no paymaster and I neither purse nor packhorse, for I have not forgotten that you had me naked, and if you account it seemly that this my body, wherein I have carried children begotten of you, be seen of all, I will be gone naked; but I pray you, in requital of my maidenhead, which I brought hither and bear not hence with me, that it please you I may carry away at the least one sole shift over and above my dowry." Gualtieri, who had more mind to weep than to otherwhat, natheless kept a stern countenance and said, "So be it; carry away a shift." As many as stood around besought him to give her a gown, so that she who had been thirteen years and more his wife should not be seen go forth of his house on such mean and shameful wise as it was to depart in her shift; but their prayers all went for nothing; wherefore the lady, having commended them to God, went forth his house in her shift, barefoot and nothing on her head, and returned to her father, followed by the tears and lamentations of all who saw her. Giannucolo,

who had never been able to believe it true that Gualtieri should entertain his daughter to wife and went in daily expectation of this event, had kept her the clothes which she had put off the morning that Gualtieri had married her and now brought them to her; whereupon she donned them and addressed herself as she had been wont to do, to the little offices of her father's house, enduring the cruel onslaught of hostile fortune with a stout heart.

Gualtieri, having done this, gave out to his people that he had chosen a daughter of one of the counts of Panago and letting make great preparations for the nuptials, sent for Griselda to come to him and said to her, "I am about to bring home this lady, whom I have newly taken to wife, and mean, at this her first coming to do her honor. Thou knowest I have no women about me who know how to array me the rooms nor to do a multitude of things that behoove unto such a festival; wherefore do thou, who art better versed than any else in these household matters, order that which is to do here and let bid such ladies as it seemeth good to thee and receive them as thou wert mistress here; then, when the nuptials are ended, thou mayest begone back to thy house." Albeit these words were all daggers to Griselda's heart, who had been unable to lay down the love she bore him as she had laid down her fair fortune, she replied, "My lord, I am ready and willing." Then, in her coarse homespun clothes, entering the house, whenas she had a little before departed in her shift, she fell to sweeping and ordering the chambers and letting place hangings and covercloths about the saloons and make ready the viands, putting her hand to everything, as she were some paltry serving-wench of the house, nor ever gave over till she had arrayed and ordered everything as it behooved. Thereafter, having let invite all the ladies of the country on Gualtieri's part, she awaited the day of the festival, which being come, with a cheerful countenance and the spirit and bearing of a lady of high degree, for all she had mean clothes on her back, she received all the ladies who came thither.

Meanwhile, Gualtieri, who had caused the two children be diligently reared in Bologna by his kinswoman, (who

was married to a gentleman of the Panago family,) the girl being now twelve years old and the fairest creature that ever was seen and the boy six, had sent to his kinsman at Bologna, praying him be pleased to come to Saluzzo with his son and daughter and take order to bring with him a goodly and honorable company and bidding him tell every one that he was carrying him the young lady to his wife, without otherwise discovering to any aught of who she was. The gentleman did as the marquess prayed him and setting out, with the girl and boy and a goodly company of gentlefolk, after some days' journey, arrived, about dinner-time, at Saluzzo, where he found all the countryfolk and many others of the neighborhood awaiting Gualtieri's new bride. The latter, being received by the ladies and come into the saloon where the tables were laid, Griselda came to meet her, clad as she was, and accosted her blithely, saying, "Welcome and fair welcome to my lady." Thereupon the ladies (who had urgently, but in vain, besought Gualtieri to suffer Griselda to abide in a chamber or lend her one of the gowns that had been hers, so that she might not go thus before his guests) were seated at table and it was proceeded to serve them. The girl was eyed by every one and all declared that Gualtieri had made a good exchange; and among the rest Griselda commended her amain, both her and her young brother.

Gualtieri perceiving that the strangeness of the case in no wise changed her and being assured that this proceeded not from lack of understanding, for that he knew her to be very quick of wit, himseemed he had now seen fully as much as he desired of his lady's patience and he judged it time to deliver her from the bitterness which he doubted not she kept hidden under her constant countenance; wherefore, calling her to himself, he said to her, smiling in the presence of every one, "How deemest thou of our bride?" "My lord," answered she, "I deem exceeding well of her, and if, as I believe, she is as discreet as she is fair, I doubt not a whit but you will live the happiest gentleman in the world with her; but I beseech you, as most I may, that you inflict not on her those pangs which you inflicted whilere on her who was sometime yours; for methinketh she might

scarce avail to endure them, both because she is younger and because she hath been delicately reared, whereas the other had been in continual fatigues from a little child." Thereupon Gualtieri, seeing she firmly believed that the young lady was to be his wife nor therefore spoke anywise less than well, seated her by his side and said to her, "Griselda, it is now time that thou reap the fruits of thy long patience and that those who have reputed me cruel and unjust and brutish should know that this I have done I wrought to an end aforeseen, willing to teach thee to be a wife and to show them how to take and use one and at the same time to beget myself perpetual quiet, what while I had to live with thee; the which, whenas I came to take a wife, I was sore afraid might not betide me, and therefore, to make proof thereof, I probed and afflicted thee after such kind as thou knowest. And meseeming, for that I have never perceived that either in word or in deed hast thou departed from my pleasure, that I have of thee that solace which I desired, I purpose presently to restore thee, at one stroke, that which I took from thee at many and to requite thee with a supreme delight the pangs I have inflicted on thee. Wherefore with a joyful heart take this whom thou deemest my bride and her brother for thy children and mine; for these be they whom thou and many others have long accounted me to have barbarously let put to death; and I am thy husband, who loveth thee over all else, believing I may vaunt me that there is none else who can be so content of his wife as can I."

So saying, he embraced her and kissed her; then, rising up, he betook himself with Griselda, who wept for joy, whereas the daughter, hearing these things, sat all stupefied, and tenderly embracing her and her brother, undeceived her and many others who were there. Thereupon the ladies arose from table, overjoyed, and withdrew with Griselda into a chamber, where, with happier augury, pulling off her mean attire, they clad her anew in a magnificent dress of her own and brought her again to the saloon, as a gentlewoman which indeed she appeared, even in rags. There she rejoiced in her children with wonder-great joy, and all being overjoyed at this happy issue, they redoubled in feast-

ing and merrymaking and prolonged the festivities several days, accounting Gualtieri a very wise man, albeit they held the trials which he had made of his lady overharsh, nay, intolerable; but over all they held Griselda most sage. The Count of Panago returned, after some days, to Bologna, and Gualtieri taking Giannucolo from his labor, placed him in such estate as befitted his father-in-law, so that he lived in honor and great solace and so ended his days; whilst he himself, having nobly married his daughter, lived long and happily with Griselda, honoring her as most might be. What more can here be said save that even in poor cottages there rain down divine spirits from heaven, like as in princely palaces there be those who were worthier to tend swine than to have lordship over men? Who but Griselda could, with a countenance, not only dry, but cheerful, have endured the barbarous and unheard proofs made by Gualtieri? Which latter had not belike been ill requited, had he happened upon one who, when he turned her out of doors in her shift, had let jumble her furbelows of another to such purpose that a fine gown had come of it.



THE SCHOLAR AND THE WIDOW

A scholar loveth a widow lady, who, being enamored of another, causeth him spend one winter's night in the snow awaiting her, and he after contriveth, by his sleight, to have her abide naked, all one mid July day, on the summit of a tower, exposed to flies and gads and sun.

NOT many years ago there was in Florence a young lady, by name Elena, fair of favor and haughty of humor, of very gentle lineage and endowed with sufficient abundance of the goods of fortune, who, being widowed of her husband, chose never to marry again, but that she was enamored of a handsome and agreeable youth of her own choice, and with the aid of a maid of hers, in whom she put great trust, being quit of every other care, she at various times spent many hours of pleasant converse with him. In these days it chanced that a young gentleman of our city, by name Rinieri, having long studied at Paris, not for the sake of after selling his knowledge by retail, as many do, but to know the nature of things and their causes, the which excellently becometh a gentleman, returned thence to Florence and there lived citizen-fashion, much honored as well for his nobility as for his learning. But, as it chanceth often that those who have the most experience of things profound, are the soonest snared of love, even so it befell this Rinieri; for, having one day repaired, by way of diversion to an entertainment, there presented herself before his eyes the aforesaid Elena, clad all in black, as our widows go, and full, to his judgment, of such beauty and pleasantness as himseemed he had never beheld in any other woman; and in his heart he deemed that he might call himself blest whom God should vouchsafe to hold her in his arms. Then, furtively considering her once and again and knowing that great things and precious were not to be acquired without travail, he altogether determined in himself to devote all his pains and all his diligence to the pleasing her, to the end that thereby he might gain her love and so avail to have his fill of her.

The young lady, (who kept not her eyes fixed upon the nether world, but, conceiting herself as much and more than as much as she was, moved them artfully hither and thither, gazing all about, and was quick to note who delighted to look upon her,) soon became aware of Rinieri and said, laughing, in herself, "I have not come hither in vain to-day; for, an I mistake not, I have caught a woodcock by the bill." Accordingly, she fell to ogling him from time to time with the tail of her eye and studied, inasmuch as she might, to let him see that she took note of him, thinking that the more men she allured and ensnared with her charms, so much the more of price would her beauty be, especially to him on whom she had bestowed it, together with her love. The learned scholar, laying aside philosophical speculations, turned all his thoughts to her and thinking to please her, inquired where she lived and proceeded to pass to and fro before her house, coloring his comings and goings with various pretexts, whilst the lady, idly glorying in this, for the reason already set out, made believe to take great pleasure in seeing him. Accordingly, he found means to clap up an acquaintance with her maid and discovering to her his love, prayed her make interest for him with her mistress, so he might avail to have her favor. The maid promised freely and told the lady, who hearkened with the heartiest laughter in the world and said, "Seest thou where yonder man cometh to lose the wit he hath brought back from Paris? Marry, we will give him that which he goeth seeking. An he bespeak thee again, do thou tell him that I love him far more than he loveth me; but that it behooveth me look to mine honor, so I may hold up my head with the other ladies; whereof, an he is wise as folk say, he will hold me so much the dearer." Alack, poor silly soul, she knew not aright, what it is to try conclusions with scholars. The maid went in search of Rinieri and finding him, did that which had been enjoined her of her mistress, whereat he was overjoyed and proceeded to use more urgent entreaties, writing letters and sending presents, all which were accepted, but he got nothing but vague and general answers; and on this wise she held him in play a great while.

At last, to show her lover, to whom she had discovered

everything, and who was whiles somewhat vexed with her for this and had conceived some jealousy of Rinieri, that he did wrong to suspect her thereof, she dispatched to the scholar, now grown very pressing, her maid, who told him, on her mistress's part, that she had never yet had an opportunity to do aught that might please him since he had certified her of his love, but that on the occasion of the festival of the Nativity she hoped to be able to be with him; wherefore, as it liked him, he was on the evening of the feast to come by night to her courtyard, whither she would go for him as first she might. At this the scholar was the gladdest man alive and betook himself at the appointed time to his mistress's house, where he was carried by the maid into a courtyard and being there locked in, proceeded to await the lady's coming. The latter had that evening sent for her lover and after she had supped merrily with him, she told him that which she purposed to do that night, adding, "And thou mayst see for thyself what and how great is the love I have borne and bear him of whom thou hast taken a jealousy." The lover heard these words with great satisfaction and was impatient to see by the fact that which the lady gave him to understand with words.

It had by chance snowed hard during the day and everything was covered with snow, wherefore the scholar had not long abidden in the courtyard before he began to feel colder than he could have wished; but, looking to recruit himself speedily, he was fain to endure it with patience. Presently, the lady said to her lover, "Let us go look from a lattice what yonder fellow, of whom thou art waxed jealous, doth and hear what he shall answer the maid, whom I have sent to parley with him." Accordingly, they betook themselves to a lattice and thence, seeing, without being seen, they heard the maid from another lattice bespeak the scholar and say, "Rinieri, my lady is the woefulest woman that was aye, for that there is one of her brothers come hither to-night, who hath talked much with her and after must needs sup with her, nor is yet gone away; but methinketh he will soon be gone; wherefore she hath not been able to come to thee, but will soon come now and prayeth thee not to take the waiting in ill part." Rinieri, believing this to be true,

replied, "Tell my lady to give herself no concern for me till such time as she can at her commodity come to me, but bid her do this as quickliest she may." The maid turned back into the house and betook herself to bed, whilst the lady said to her gallant, "Well, how sayst thou? Thinkest thou that, an I wish him such weal as thou fearest, I would suffer him stand a-freezing down yonder?" So saying, she returned to her lover, who was now in part satisfied, and there they spent the rest of the evening with pleasure, laughing and making mock of the wretched scholar, who fared to and fro the while in the courtyard, making shift to warm himself with exercise, nor had whereas he might seat himself or shelter from the night-damp. He cursed her brother's long stay with the lady and took everything he heard for the opening of a door to him by her, but hoped in vain.

The lady, having enjoyed the evening with her lover till near midnight, said to him, "How deemest thou, my soul, of our scholar? Whether seemeth to thee the greater, his wit or the love I bear him? Will the cold which I presently cause him suffer do away from thy mind the doubts which my pleasantries aroused therein the other day?" Whereto he replied, "Heart of my body, yes, I know right well that, like as thou art my good and my peace and my delight and all my hope, even so am I thine." "Then," rejoined she, "kiss me a thousand times, so I may see if thou sayst sooth." Whereupon he clapped her fast in his arms and kissed not a thousand, but more than an hundred thousand times. Then, after they had abidden awhile in such discourse, the lady said, "Marry, let us arise a little and go see if the fire is anydele spent, wherein this my new lover wrote me that he burnt all day long." Accordingly, they arose and getting them to the accustomed lattice, looked out into the courtyard, where they saw the scholar dancing a right merry jig on the snow, so fast and brisk that never had they seen the like, to the sound of the chattering of the teeth that he made for excess of cold; whereupon quoth the lady, "How sayst thou, sweet my hope? Seemeth it to thee that I know how to make folk jig it without sound of trump or bagpipe?" Whereto he

answered, laughing, "Ay dost thou, my chief delight." Quoth the lady, "I will that we go down to the door; thou shalt abide quiet, whilst I bespeak him, and we shall hear what he will say; belike we shall have no less diversion thereof than we had from seeing him."

Accordingly, they softly opened the chamber and stole down to the door, where, without opening it anydele, the lady called to the scholar in a low voice by a little hole that was there. Rinieri hearing himself called, praised God, taking it oversoon for granted that he was to be presently admitted, and coming up to the door, said, "Here am I, madam; open for God's sake, for I die of cold." "O ay," replied the lady, "I know thou art a chilly one; is then the cold so exceeding great, because, forsooth, there is a little snow about? I wot the nights are much colder at Paris. I cannot open to thee yet, for that accursed brother of mine, who came to sup with me to-night, is not yet gone; but he will soon begone and I will come incontinent to open to thee. I have but now very hardly stolen away from him, that I might come to exhort thee not to wax weary of waiting." "Alack, madam," cried the scholar, "I pray you for God's sake open to me, so I may abide within under cover, for that this little while past there is come on the thickest snow in the world and it yet snoweth, and I will wait for you as long as it shall please you." "Woe's me; sweet my treasure," replied the lady, "that cannot I; for this door maketh so great a noise, whenas it is opened, that it would lightly be heard of my brother, if I should open to thee; but I will go bid him begone, so I may after come back and open to thee." "Then go quickly," rejoined he; "and I prithee let make a good fire, so I may warm me as soon as I come in, for that I am grown so cold I can scarce feel myself." Quoth the lady, "That should not be possible, an that be true which thou hast many a time written me, to wit, that thou burnest for the love of me. Now, I must go; wait and be of good heart." Then, with her lover, who had heard all this with the utmost pleasure, she returned again to her room where they employed much more time in amusing conversation and lively flirtation, and in making mock of Rinieri.

Meanwhile, the unhappy scholar (now well nigh grown stark, so sore did his teeth chatter), perceiving at last that he was befooled, essayed again and again to open the door and sought an he might not avail to issue thence by another way; but, finding no means thereunto, he fell a-ranging to and fro like a lion, cursing the foulness of the weather and the lady's malignity and the length of the night, together with his own credulity; wherefore, being sore despited against his mistress, the long and ardent love he had borne her was suddenly changed to fierce and bitter hatred and he resolved in himself many and various things, so he might find a means of revenge, the which he now desired far more eagerly than he had before desired to be with the lady. At last, after much and long tarriance, the night drew near unto day and the dawn began to appear; whereupon the maid, who had been lessoned by the lady, coming down, opened the courtyard door and feigning to have compassion of Rinieri, said, "Bad luck may he have who came hither yestereve! He hath kept us all night upon thorns and hath caused thee freeze, but knowest thou what? Bear it with patience, for that which could not be to-night shall be another time. Indeed, I know nought could have happened that had been so displeasing to my lady."

The despitiful scholar, like a wise man as he was, who knew that threats are but arms for the threatened, locked up in his breast that which untempered will would fain have vented and said in a low voice, without anywise showing himself vexed: "In truth I have had the worst night I ever had; but I have well apprehended that the lady is nowise to blame for this, inasmuch as she herself, of her compassion for me, came down hither to excuse herself and to hearten me; and as thou sayest, that which hath not been to-night shall be another time. Commend me to her and God be with thee." Therewithal, well nigh stark with cold, he made his way, as best he might, back to his house, where, being drowsed to death, he cast himself upon his bed to sleep and awoke well nigh crippled of his arms and legs; wherefore, sending for sundry physicians and acquainting them with the cold he had suffered, he caused take order for his cure. The leeches, plying him with prompt and very

potent remedies, hardly, after some time, availed to recover him of the shrinking of the sinews and cause them relax; and but that he was young and that the season came on, he had had overmuch to suffer. However, being restored to health and lustihead, he kept his hate to himself and feigned himself more than ever enamored of his widow.

Now it befell, after a certain space of time, that fortune furnished him with an occasion of satisfying his desire [for vengeance], for that the youth beloved of the widow being without any regard for the love she bore him, fallen enamored of another lady, would have nor little nor much to say to her nor do aught to pleasure her, wherefore she pined in tears and bitterness. But her maid, who had great compassion of her, finding no way of rousing her mistress from the chagrin into which the loss of her lover had cast her and seeing the scholar pass along the street, after the wonted manner, entered into a fond conceit, to wit, that the lady's lover might be brought by some necromantic operation or other to love her as he had been wont to do and that the scholar should be a past master in this manner of thing and told her thought to her mistress. The latter, little wise, without considering that, had the scholar been acquainted with the black art, he would have practised it for himself, lent her mind to her maid's words and bade her forthright learn from him if he would do it and give him all assurance that, in requital thereof, she would do whatsoever pleased him. The maid did her errand well and diligently, which when the scholar heard, he was overjoyed and said in himself, "Praised be Thou, my God! The time is come when with Thine aid I may avail to make yonder wicked woman pay the penalty of the harm she did me in requital of the great love I bore her." Then to the maid, "Tell my lady," quoth he, "that she need be in no concern for this, for that, were her lover in the Indies, I would speedily cause him come to her and crave pardon of that which he hath done to displeasure her; but the means she must take to this end I purpose to impart to herself, when and where it shall most please her. So say to her and hearten her on my part."

The maid carried his answer to her mistress and it was

agreed that they should foregather at Santa Lucia del Prato, whither, accordingly, the lady and the scholar being come and speaking together alone, she, remembering her not that she had aforetime brought him well nigh to death's door, openly discovered to him her case and that which she desired and besought him to succor her. "Madam," answered he, "it is true that amongst the other things I learned at Paris was necromancy, whereof for certain I know that which is extant thereof; but for that the thing is supremely displeasing unto God, I had sworn never to practice it either for myself or for others. Nevertheless, the love I bear you is of such potency that I know not how I may deny you aught that you would have me do; wherefore, though it should behoove me for this alone go to the devil's stead, I am yet ready to do it, since it is your pleasure. But I must forewarn you that the thing is more unfeeling to do than you perchance imagine, especially whenas a woman would recall a man to loving her or a man a woman, for that this cannot be done save by the very person unto whom it pertaineth; and it behooveth that whoso doth it be of an assured mind, seeing it must be done anights and in solitary places without company; which things I know not how you are disposed to do." The lady, more enamored than discreet, replied, "Love spurreth me on such wise that there is nothing I would not do to have again him who hath wrongfully forsaken me. Alas, and it please you, show me in what I must approve myself assured of mind." "Madam," replied the scholar, who had a patch of ill hair to his tail, "I must make an image of pewter in his name whom you desire to get again, which whenas I shall send you, it will behoove you seven times bathe yourself therewith, all naked, in a running stream, at the hour of the first sleep, what time the moon is far on the wane. Thereafter, naked as you are, you must get up into a tree or to the top of some uninhabited house and turning to the north, with the image in your hand, seven times running say certain words which I shall give you written; which when you shall have done, there will come to you two of the fairest damsels you ever beheld, who will salute you and ask you courteously what you would have done. Do you well and

thoroughly discover to them your desires and look it betide you not to name one for another. As soon as you have told them, they will depart and you may then come down to the place where you shall have left your clothes and re-clothe yourself and return home; and for certain, ere it be the middle of the ensuing night, your lover will come, weeping, to crave your pardon and mercy; and know that from that time forth he will never again leave you for any other."

The lady, hearing all this and lending entire faith thereto, was half comforted, herseeming she already had her lover again in her arms, and said, "Never fear; I will very well do these things, and I have therefor the finest commodity in the world; for I have, towards the upper end of the Val d' Arno, a farm, which is very near the river-bank, and it is now July, so that bathing will be pleasant; more by token that I mind me there is, not far from the stream, a little uninhabited tower, save that the shepherds climb up bytimes, by a ladder of chestnut-wood that is there, to a sollar at the top, to look for their strayed beasts: otherwise it is a very solitary out-of-the-way place. Thither will I betake myself and there I hope to do that which you shall enjoin me the best in the world." The scholar, who very well knew both the place and the tower mentioned by the lady, was rejoiced to be certified of her intent and said, "Madam, I was never in these parts and therefore know neither the farm nor the tower; but, an it be as you say, nothing in the world can be better. Wherefore, whenas it shall be time, I will send you the image and the conjuration; but I pray you instantly, whenas you shall have gotten your desire and shall know I have served you well, that you be mindful of me and remember to keep your promise to me." She answered that she would without fail do it and taking leave of him, returned to her house; whilst the scholar, rejoiced for that himseemed his desire was like to have effect, made an image with certain talismanic characters of his own devising, and wrote a rigmarole of his fashion, by way of conjuration; the which, whenas it seemed to him time, he dispatched to the lady and sent to tell her that she must that very night, without more tarriance, do that

which he had enjoined her; after which he secretly betook himself, with a servant of his, to the house of one of his friends who abode very near the tower, so he might give effect to his design.

The lady, on her part, set out with her maid and repaired to her farm, where, as soon as the night was come, she made a show of going to bed and sent the maid away to sleep; but, towards the hour of the first sleep, she issued quietly forth of the house and betook herself to the bank of the Arno hard by the tower, where, looking first well all about and seeing nor hearing any, she put off her clothes and hiding them under a bush, bathed seven times with the image; after which, naked as she was, she made for the tower, image in hand. The scholar, who had, at the coming on of the night, hidden himself with his servant among the willows and other trees near the tower and had witnessed all this, seeing her, as she passed thus naked close to him, overcome the darkness of the night with the whiteness of her body and felt some compassion of her. But, calling to mind who he was and what the injury he had suffered and wherefore and at whose hands and he being thereby re-kindled in despite and compassion and carnal appetite banished, he abode firm in his purpose and let her go.

The lady, going up on to the tower and turning to the north, began to repeat the words given her by the scholar, who, coming quietly into the tower awhile after, little by little removed the ladder, which led to the sollar where she was, and after awaited that which she should do and say. Meanwhile, the lady, having seven times said her conjuration, began to look for the two damsels and so long was her waiting (more by token that she felt it cooler than she could have wished) that she saw the dawn appear; whereupon, woeful that it had not befallen as the scholar had told her, she said in herself, "I fear me yonder man hath had a mind to give me a night such as that which I gave him; but, an that be his intent, he hath ill known to avenge himself, for that this night hath not been as long by a third as was his, forbye that the cold was of another sort." Then, so the day might not surprise her there, she proceeded to seek to go down from the tower, but found the ladder gone;

whereupon her courage forsook her, as it were the world had failed beneath her feet, and she fell down aswoon upon the platform of the tower. As soon as her senses returned to her, she fell to weeping piteously and bemoaning herself, and perceiving but too well that this must have been the scholar's doing, she went on to blame herself for having affronted others and after for having overmuch trusted in him whom she had good reason to believe her enemy; and on this wise she abode a great while. Then, looking if there were no way of descending and seeing none, she fell again to her lamentation and gave herself up to bitter thought, saying in herself, "Alas, unhappy woman! What will be said of thy brothers and kinsfolk and neighbors and generally of all the people of Florence, when it shall be known that thou hast been found here naked? Thy repute, that hath hitherto been so great, will be known to have been false; and shouldst thou seek to frame lying excuses for thyself, (if indeed there are any to be found), the accursed scholar, who knoweth all thine affairs, will not suffer thee lie. Ah wretched woman, that wilt at one stroke have lost the youth so ill-fatedly beloved and thine own honor!"

Therewithal she fell into such a passion of woe that she was like to cast herself down from the tower to the ground; but, the sun being now risen and she drawing near to one side of the walls of the tower, to look if any boy should pass with cattle, whom she might send for her maid, it chanced that the scholar, who had slept awhile at the foot of a bush, awaking, saw her and she him; whereupon quoth he to her, "Good day, madam; are the damsels come yet?" The lady, seeing and hearing him, began afresh to weep sore and besought him to come within the tower, so she might speak with him. In this he was courteous enough to comply with her and she laying herself prone on the platform and showing only her head at the opening, said, weeping, "Assuredly, Rinieri, if I gave thee an ill night, thou hast well avenged thyself of me, for that, albeit it is July, I have thought to freeze this night, naked as I am, more by token that I have so sore bewept both the trick I put upon thee and mine own folly in believing thee that it is a wonder I have any eyes left in my head. Wherefore

I entreat thee, not for the love of me, whom thou hast no call to love, but for the love of thyself, who art a gentleman, that thou be content, for vengeance of the injury I did thee, with that which thou hast already done and cause fetch me my clothes and suffer me come down hence, nor seek to take from me that which thou couldst not after restore me, an thou wouldst, to wit, my honor; for, if I took from thee the being with me that night, I can render thee many nights for that one, whensoever it liketh thee. Let this, then, suffice and let it content thee, as a man of honor, to have availed to avenge thyself and to have caused me confess it. Seek not to use thy strength against a woman; no glory is it for eagle to have overcome a dove, wherefore, for the love of God and thine own honor, have pity on me."

The scholar, with stern mind revolving in himself the injury suffered and seeing her weep and beseech, felt at once both pleasure and annoy; pleasure in the revenge which he had desired more than aught else, and annoy he felt, for that his humanity moved him to compassion of the unhappy woman. However, humanity availing not to overcome the fierceness of his appetite (for vengeance), "Madam Elena," answered he, "if my prayers (which, it is true, I knew not to bathe with tears nor to make honeyed, as thou presently knowest to proffer thine,) had availed, the night when I was dying of cold in thy snow-filled courtyard, to procure me to be put of thee but a little under cover, it were a light matter to me to hearken now unto thine; but, if thou be presently so much more concerned for thine honor than in the past and it be grievous to thee to abide up there naked, address these thy prayers to him in whose arms thou didst not scruple, that other night which thou thyself recallest, to abide, hearing me the while go about thy courtyard, chattering with my teeth and trampling the snow, and get thee succor of him; cause him fetch thee thy clothes and set thee the ladder, whereby thou mayest descend, and study to inform him with tenderness for thine honor, the which thou hast not scrupled both now and a thousand other times to imperil for him. Why dost thou not call him to come help thee? To whom pertaineth it more than unto

him? Thou art his; and what should he regard or succor, an he regard not neither succor thee? Call him, silly woman that thou art, and prove if the love thou bearest him and thy wits and his together can avail to deliver thee from my folly, whereof, dallying with him the while, thou questionedst aforetime whether himseemed the greater, my folly or the love thou borest him. Thou canst not now be lavish to me of that which I desire not, nor couldst thou deny it to me, an I desired it; keep thy nights for thy lover, an it chance that thou come off hence alive; be they thine and his. I had overmuch of one of them and it sufficeth me to have been once befooled. Again, using thy craft and wiliness in speech, thou studiest, by extolling me, to gain my goodwill and callest me a gentleman and a man of honor, thinking thus to cajole me into playing the magnanimous and forbearing to punish thee for thy wickedness; but thy blandishments shall not now darken me the eyes of the understanding, as did thy disloyal promises whilere. I know myself, nor did I learn so much of myself what while I sojourned at Paris as thou taughtest me in one single night of thine. But, granted I were indeed magnanimous, thou art none of those towards whom magnanimity should be shown; the issue of punishment, as likewise of vengeance, in the case of wild beasts such as thou art, behooveth to be death, whereas for human beings that should suffice whereof thou speakest. Wherefore, albeit I am no eagle, knowing thee to be no dove, but a venomous serpent, I mean to pursue thee, as an immemorial enemy, with every hate and all my might, albeit this that I do to thee can scarce properly be styled vengeance, but rather chastisement, inasmuch as vengeance should overpass the offense and this will not attain thereto; for that, an I sought to avenge myself, considering to what a pass thou broughtest my soul, thy life, should I take it from thee, would not suffice me, no, nor the lives of an hundred others such as thou, since, slaying thee, I should but slay a vile, wicked and worthless trull of a woman. And what a devil more account (setting aside this thy scantling of fair favor, which a few years will mar, filling it with wrinkles,) art thou than whatsoever other sorry serving-drab? Whereas it was no

fault of thine that thou failedst of causing the death of a man of honor, as thou styledst me but now, whose life may yet in one day be of more service to the world than an hundred thousand of thy like could be what while the world endureth. I will teach thee, then, by means of this annoy that thou sufferest, what it is to flout men of sense, and particularly scholars, and will give thee cause never more, an thou comest off alive, to fall into such a folly. But, an thou have so great a wish to descend, why dost thou not cast thyself down? On this wise, with God's help, thou wilt, by breaking thy neck, at once deliver thyself from the torment, wherein it seemeth to thee thou art, and make me the joyfullest man in the world. Now, I have no more to say to thee. I knew to contrive on such wise that I caused thee go up thither; do thou now contrive to come down thence, even as thou knewest to befool me."

What while the scholar spoke thus, the wretched lady wept without ceasing and the time lapsed by, the sun still rising high and higher; but, when she saw that he was silent, she said, "Alack, cruel man, if the accursed night was so grievous to thee and if my default seem to thee so heinous a thing that neither my young beauty nor my bitter tears and humble prayers may avail to move thee to any pity, at least let this act of mine alone some little move thee and abate the rigor of thy rancor, to wit, that I but now trusted in thee and discovered to thee mine every secret, opening withal to thy desire a way whereby thou mightest avail to make me cognizant of my sin; more by token that, except I had trusted in thee, thou hadst had no means of availing to take of me that vengeance, which thou seemest to have so ardently desired. For God's sake, leave thine anger and pardon me henceforth; I am ready, so thou wilt but forgive me and bring me down hence, altogether to renounce yonder faithless youth and to have thee alone to lover and lord, albeit thou decriest my beauty, avouching it short-lived and little worth; natheless, whatever it be, compared with that of other women, yet this I know, that, if for nought else, it is to be prized for that it has again and again been admired by all young men, and thou art not old. And albeit I am cruelly entreated of thee, I cannot

believe withal that thou wouldst fain see me die so unseemly a death as were the casting myself down from this tower, as in desperation, before thine eyes, wherein, an thou wast not a liar as thou art since become, I was erst so pleasing. Alack, have ruth on me for God's sake and pity's. The sun be-ginneth to wax hot, and like as the overmuch cold irked me this night, even so doth the heat begin to do me sore annoy."

The scholar, who held her in parley for his diversion, answered, "Madam, thou hast not presently trusted thine honor in my hands for any love that thou borest me, but to regain him whom thou hast lost, wherefore it meriteth but greater severity, and if thou think that this way alone was apt and opportune unto the vengeance desired of me, thou thinkest foolishly; I had a thousand others; nay, whilst feigning to love thee, I had spread a thousand snares about thy feet, and it would not have been long, had this not chanced, ere thou must of necessity have fallen into one of them, nor couldst thou have fallen into any but it had caused thee greater torment and shame than this present, the which I took, not to ease thee, but to be the quicker satisfied. And though all else should have failed me, the pen had still been left me, wherewithal I would have written such and so many things of thee and after such a fashion that, whenas thou camest (as thou wouldst have come) to know of them, thou wouldst a thousand times a day have wished thyself never born. The power of the pen is far greater than they imagine who have not proved it with experience. I swear to God (so may he gladden me to the end of this vengeance that I take of thee, even as He hath made me glad thereof in the beginning!) that I would have written such things of thee, that, being ashamed, not to say before other folk, but before thine own self, thou shouldst have put out thine own eyes, not to see thyself in the glass; wherefore let not the little rivulet twit the sea with having caused it wax. Of thy love or that thou be mine, I reckon not, as I have already said, a jot; be thou e'en his an thou may, whose thou wast erst and whom, as I once hated, so at this present I love, having regard unto that which he hath wrought towards thee of late. You women go falling enamored of young springalds and covet their love, for that

you see them somewhat fresher of color and blacker of beard and they go erect and jaunty and dance and joust, all which things they have had who are somewhat more in years, ay, and these know that which those have yet to learn. Moreover, you hold them better cavaliers and deem that they fare more miles in a day than men of riper age. Certes, I confess that they jumble a wench's furbelows more briskly; but those more in years, being men of experience, know better where the fleas stick, and little meat and savory is far and away rather to be chosen than much and insipid, more by token that hard trotting undoth and wearie folk, how young soever they be, whereas easy going, though belike it bring one somewhat later to the inn, at the least carrieth him thither unfatigued. You women perceive not, animals without understanding that you are, how much ill lieth hid under this scantling of fair seeming. Young fellows are not content with one woman; nay, as many as they see, so many do they covet and of so many themseemeth they are worthy; wherefore their love cannot be stable, and of this thou mayst presently of thine own experience bear very true witness. Themseemeth they are worthy to be worshiped and caressed of their mistresses and they have no greater glory than to vaunt them of those whom they have had; the which default of theirs hath aforetime cast many a woman into the arms of monks, who tell no tales. Albeit thou sayst that never did any know of thine amours, save thy maid and myself, thou knowest it ill and believest awry, an thou think thus. His quarter talketh well nigh of nothing else, and mine likewise; but most times the last to whose ears such things come is he to whom they pertain. Young men, to boot, despoil you, whereas it is given you of men of riper years. Since, then, thou hast ill chosen, be thou his to whom thou gavest thyself and leave me, of whom thou madest mock, to others, for that I have found a mistress of much more account than thou, who hath been wise enough to know me better than thou didst. And that thou mayst carry into the other world greater assurance of the desire of mine eyes than meseemeth thou gatherest from my words, do but cast thyself down forthright and thy soul, being, as I doubt not it will be, straightway received

into the arms of the devil, will be able to see if mine eyes be troubled or not at seeing thee fall headlong. But, as medoubteth thou wilt not consent to do me so much pleasure, I counsel thee, if the sun begin to scorch thee, remember thee of the cold thou madest me suffer, which an thou mingle with the heat aforesaid, thou wilt without fail feel the sun attempered."

The disconsolate lady, seeing that the scholar's words tended to a cruel end, fell again to weeping and said, "Harkye, since nothing I can say availeth to move thee to pity of me, let the love move thee, which thou bearest that lady whom thou hast found wiser than I and of whom thou sayst thou art beloved, and for the love of her pardon me and fetch me my clothes, so I may dress myself, and cause me descend hence." Therewith the scholar began to laugh and seeing that tierce was now passed by a good hour, replied "Marry, I know not how to say thee nay, since thou conjurest me by such a lady; tell me where thy clothes are and I will go for them and help thee come down from up yonder." The lady, believing this, was somewhat comforted and showed him where she had laid her clothes; whereupon he went forth of the tower and bidding his servant not depart thence, but abide near at hand and watch as most he might that none should enter there till such time as he should return, went off to his friend's house, where he dined at his ease, and after, whenas himseemeth time, betook himself to sleep; whilst the lady, left upon the tower, albeit some little heartened with fond hope, natheless beyond measure woebegone, sat up and creeping close to that part of the wall where there was a little shade, fell a-waiting, in company of very bitter thoughts. There she abode, now hoping and now despairing of the scholar's return with her clothes, and passing from one thought to another, she presently fell asleep, as one who was overcome of dolor and who had slept no whit the past night.

The sun, which was exceeding hot, being now risen to the meridian, beat full and straight upon her tender and delicate body and upon her head, which was all uncovered, with such force that not only did it burn her flesh, wherever it touched it, but cracked and opened it all over little by

little, and such was the pain of the burning that it constrained her to awake, albeit she slept fast. Feeling herself on the roast and moving somewhat, it seemed as if all her scorched skin cracked and clove asunder for the motion, as we see happen with a scorched sheep-skin, if any stretch it, and to boot her head irked her so sore that it seemed it would burst, which was no wonder. And the platform of the tower was so burning hot that she could find no resting-place there either for her feet or for otherwhat; wherefore, without standing fast, she still removed now hither and now thither, weeping. Moreover, there being not a breath of wind, the flies and gads flocked thither in swarms and settling upon her cracked flesh, stung her so cruelly that each prick seemed to her a pike-stab; wherefore she stinted not to fling her hands about, still cursing herself, her life, her lover and the scholar.

Being thus by the inexpressible heat of the sun, by the flies and the gads and likewise by hunger, but much more by thirst, and by a thousand irksome thoughts, to boot, tortured and stung and pierced to the quick, she started to her feet and addressed herself to look if she might see or hear any one near at hand, resolved, whatever might betide thereof, to call him and crave aid. But of this resource also had her unfriendly fortune deprived her. The husbandmen were all departed from the fields for the heat, more by token that none had come that day to work therein, they being all engaged in threshing out their sheaves beside their houses; wherefore she heard nought but crickets and saw the Arno, which latter sight, provoking in her desire of its waters, abated not her thirst, but rather increased it. In several places also she saw thickets and shady places and houses here and there, which were all alike to her an anguish for desire of them. What more shall we say of the ill-starred lady? The sun overhead and the heat of the platform underfoot and the stings of the flies and gads on every side had so entreated her that, whereas with her whiteness she had overcome the darkness of the foregoing night, she was presently grown red as ruddle, and all bescabbed as she was with blood, had seemed to whoso saw her the foulest thing in the world.

As she abode on this wise, without aught of hope or counsel, expecting death more than otherwhat, it being now past half none, the scholar, arising from sleep and remembering him of his mistress, returned to the tower, to see what was come of her, and sent his servant, who was yet fasting, to eat. The lady, hearing him, came, all weak and anguishful as she was for the grievous annoy she had suffered, over against the trap-door and seating herself there, began, weeping, to say, "Indeed, Rinieri, thou hast beyond measure avenged thyself, for, if I made thee freeze in my courtyard by night, thou hast make me roast, nay burn, on this tower by day and die of hunger and thirst to boot; wherefore I pray thee by the One only God that thou come up hither and since my heart suffereth me not give myself death with mine own hands, give it me thou, for that I desire it more than aught else, such and so great are the torments I endure. Or, an thou wilt not do me that favor, let bring me, at the least, a cup of water, so I may wet my mouth, whereunto my tears suffice not; so sore is the drouth and the burning that I have therein."

The scholar knew her weakness by her voice and eke saw, in part, her body all burnt up of the sun; wherefore and for her humble prayers there overcame him a little compassion of her; but none the less he answered, "Wicked woman, thou shalt not die by my hands; nay, by thine own shalt thou die, an thou have a mind thereto; and thou shalt have of me as much water for the allaying of thy heat as I had fire of thee for the comforting of cold. This much I sore regret that, whereas it behooved me heal the infirmity of my cold with the heat of stinking dung, that of thy heat will be healed with the coolth of odoriferous rose-water; and whereas I was like to lose both limbs and life, thou, flayed by this heat, wilt abide fair none otherwise than doth the snake, casting its old skin." "Alack, wretch that I am," cried the lady, "God give beauties on such wise acquired to those who wish me ill! But thou, that art more cruel than any wild beast, how couldst thou have the heart to torture me after this fashion? What more could I expect from thee or any other, if I had done all thy kinsfolk to death with the cruellest torments? Certes, meknoweth not what greater

cruelty would be wreaked upon a traitor who had brought a whole city to slaughter than that whereto thou hast exposed me in causing me be roasted of the sun and devoured of the flies and withal denying me a cup of water, whenas to murderers condemned of justice is oftentimes, as they go to their death, given to drink of wine, so but they ask it. Nay, since I see thee abide firm in thy savage cruelty and that my sufferance availeth not anywise to move thee, I will resign myself with patience to receive death, so God, whom I beseech to look with equitable eyes upon this thy dealing, may have mercy upon my soul."

So saying, she dragged herself painfully to the midward of the platform, despairing to escape alive from so fierce a heat; and not once, but a thousand times, over and above her other torments, she thought to swoon for thirst, still weeping and bemoaning her ill-hap. However, it being now vespers and it seeming to the scholar he had done enough, he caused his servant take up the unhappy lady's clothes and wrap them in his cloak; then, betaking himself in her house, he found her maid seated before the door, sad and disconsolate and unknowing what to do, and said to her, "Good woman, what is come of thy mistress?" "Sir," replied she, "I know not. I thought to find her this morning in the bed whither meseemed I saw her betake herself yesternight; but I can find her neither there nor elsewhere and know not what is come of her; wherefore I suffer the utmost concern. But you, sir, can you not tell me aught of her?" Quoth he, "Would I had had thee together with her whereas I have had her, so I might have punished thee of thy default, like as I have punished her for hers! But assuredly thou shalt not escape from my hands, ere I have so paid thee for thy dealings that thou shalt never more make mock of any man, without remembering thee of me." Then to his servant, "Give her the clothes," quoth he, "and bid her go to her mistress, as she will." The man did his bidding and gave the clothes to the maid, who, knowing them and hearing what Rinieri said, was sore afraid lest they should have slain her mistress and scarce refrained from crying out; then, the scholar being gone, she set out with the clothes for the tower, weeping the while.

Now it chanced that one of the lady's husbandmen had that day lost two of his swine and going in search of them, came, a little after the scholar's departure, to the tower. An he went spying about everywhere if he should see his hogs, he heard the piteous lamentation made of the miserable lady and climbing up as most he might, cried out, "Who maketh moan therealoft?" The lady knew her husbandman's voice and calling him by name, said to him, "For God's sake, fetch me my maid and contrive so she may come up hither to me." Whereupon quoth the man, recognizing her, "Alack, madam, who hath brought you up yonder? Your maid hath gone seeking you all day; but who had ever thought you could be here?" Then, taking the ladder-poles, he set them up in their place and addressed himself to bind the cross-staves thereto with withy bands. Meanwhile, up came the maid, who no sooner entered the tower than, unable any longer to hold her tongue, she fell to crying out, buffeting herself the while with her hands, "Alack, sweet my lady, where are you?" The lady, hearing her, answered as loudliest she might, "O sister mine, I am here aloft. Weep not, but fetch me my clothes quickly." When the maid heard her speak, she was in a manner all recomforted and with the husbandman's aid, mounting the ladder, which was now well nigh repaired, reached the sollar, where, whenas she saw her lady lying naked on the ground, all forspent and wan, more as she were a half-burnt log than a human being, she thrust her nails into her own face and fell a-weeping over her, no otherwise than as she had been dead.

The lady besought her for God's sake be silent and help her dress herself, and learning from her that none knew where she had been save those who had carried her the clothes and the husbandman there present, was somewhat comforted and prayed them for God's sake never to say aught of the matter to any one. Then, after much parley, the husbandman, taking the lady in his arms, for that she could not walk, brought her safely without the tower; but the unlucky maid, who had remained behind, descending less circumspectly, made a slip at the foot and falling from the ladder to the ground, broke her thigh, whereupon she

fell a-roaring for the pain, that it seemed a lion. The husbandman, setting the lady down on a plot of grass, went to see what ailed the maid and finding her with her thigh broken, carried her also to the grass-plot and laid her beside her mistress, who, seeing this befallen in addition to her other troubles and that she had broken her thigh by whom she looked to have been succored more than by any else, was beyond measure woe-begone and fell a-weeping afresh and so piteously that not only could the husbandman not avail to comfort her, but himself fell a-weeping likewise. But presently, the sun being now low, he repaired, at the instance of the disconsolate lady, lest the night should overtake them there, to his own house, and there called his wife and two brothers of his, who returned to the tower with a plank and setting the maid thereon, carried her home, whilst he himself, having comforted the lady with a little cold water and kind words, took her up in his arms and brought her to her own chamber.

His wife gave her a wine-sop to eat and after undressing her, put her to bed; and they contrived that night to have her and her maid carried to Florence. There, the lady, who had shifts and devices in great plenty, framed a story of her fashion, altogether out of conformity with that which had passed, and gave her brothers and sisters and every one else to believe that this had befallen herself and her maid by dint of diabolical bewitchments. Physicians were quickly at hand, who, not without putting her to very great anguish and vexation, recovered the lady of a sore fever, after she had once and again left her skin sticking to the sheets, and on like wise healed the maid of her broken thigh. Wherefore, forgetting her lover, from that time forth she discreetly forbore both from making mock of others and from loving, whilst the scholar, hearing that the maid had broken her thigh, held himself fully avenged and passed on, content, without saying otherwhat thereof. Thus, then, did it befall the foolish young lady of her pranks, for that she thought to fool it with a scholar as she would have done with another, unknowing that scholars,—I will not say all, but the most part of them,—know where the devil keepeth his tail.



THE COOK'S WIT

Chichibio, cook to Currado Gianfigliuzzi, with a ready word spoken to save himself, turneth his master's anger into laughter and escapeth the punishment threatened him by the latter.

CURRADO GIANFIGLIAZZI hath still been a noble citizen of our city, liberal and magnificent, and leading a knightly life, hath ever, letting be for the present his weightier doings, taken delight in hawks and hounds. Having one day with a falcon of his brought down a crane and finding it young and fat, he sent it to a good cook he had, a Venetian hight Chichibio, bidding him roast it for supper and dress it well. Chichibio, who looked the new-caught gull he was, trussed the crane and setting it to the fire, proceeded to cook it diligently. When it was all but done and gave out a very savory smell, it chanced that a wench of the neighborhood, Brunetta by name, of whom Chichibio was sore enamored, entered the kitchen and smelling the crane and seeing it, instantly besought him to give her a thigh thereof. He answered her, singing, and said, "Thou shalt not have it from me, Mistress Brunetta, thou shalt not have it from me." Whereat she, being vexed, said to him, "By God His faith, an thou give it me not, thou shalt never have of me aught that shall pleasure thee." In brief, many were the words between them and at last, Chichibio, not to anger his mistress, cut off one of the thighs of the crane and gave it her.

The bird being after set before Messer Currado and certain stranger guests of his, lacking a thigh, and the former marveling thereat, he let call Chichibio and asked him what was come of the other thigh; whereto the liar of a Venetian answered without hesitation, "Sir, cranes have but one thigh and one leg." "What a devil?" cried Currado in a rage. "They have but one thigh and one leg? Have I never seen a crane before?" "Sir," replied Chichibio, "it is as I tell you, and whenas it pleaseth you, I will cause you see it in the quick." Currado, out of regard for the strangers he had

with him, chose not to make more words of the matter, but said, "Since thou sayst thou wilt cause me see it in the quick, a thing I never yet saw or heard tell of, I desire to see it to-morrow morning, in which case I shall be content; but I swear to thee by Christ His body, that, an it be otherwise, I will have thee served on such wise that thou shalt still have cause to remember my name to thy sorrow so long as thou livest." There was an end of the talk for that night; but, next morning, as soon as it was day, Currado, whose anger was nothing abated for sleep, arose, still full of wrath, and bade bring the horses; then, mounting Chichibio upon a rouncey, he carried him off towards a watercourse, on whose banks cranes were still to be seen at break of day, saying, "We shall soon see who lied yester-eve, thou or I."

Chichibio, seeing that his master's wrath yet endured and that needs must he make good his lie and knowing not how he should avail thereunto, rode after Currado in the greatest fright that might be, and fain would have fled, so but he might. But, seeing no way of escape, he looked now before him and now behind and now on either side and took all he saw for cranes standing on two feet. Presently, coming near to the river, he chanced to catch sight, before any other, of a round dozen of cranes on the bank, all perched on one leg, as they use to do, when they sleep; whereupon he straightway showed them to Currado, saying, "Now, sir, if you look at those that stand yonder, you may very well see that I told you the truth yesternight, to wit, that cranes have but one thigh and one leg." Currado, seeing them, answered, "Wait, and I will show thee that they have two," and going somewhat nearer to them, he cried out, "Ho! Ho!" At this the cranes, putting down the other leg, all, after some steps, took to flight; whereupon Currado said to him, "How sayst thou now, malapert knave that thou art? Deemest thou they have two legs?" Chichibio, all confounded and knowing not whether he stood on his head or his heels, answered, "Ay, sir; but you did not cry, 'Ho! Ho!' to yesternight's crane: had you cried thus, it would have put out the other thigh and other leg, even as did thus yonder." This reply so tickled Currado that all

his wrath was changed into mirth and laughter and he said, "Chichibio, thou art in the right; indeed I should have done it." Thus, then, with his prompt and comical answer did Chichibio avort ill luck and made his peace with his master.



CALANDRINO AND THE HELIOTROPE

Calandrino, Bruno and Buffalmacco go coasting along the Mugnone in search of the Heliotrope and Calandrino thinketh to have found it. Accordingly he returneth home, laden with stones, and his wife chideth him; whereupon, flying out into a rage, he beateth her and recounteth to his companions that which they know better than he.

IN our city, which hath ever abounded in various fashions and strange folks, there was once, no great while since, a painter called Calandrino, a simple-witted man and of strange usances. He companied most of his time with other two painters, called the one Bruno and the other Buffalmacco, both very merry men, but otherwise well-advised and shrewd, who consorted with Calandrino for that they oftentimes had great diversion of his fashions and his simplicity. There was then also in Florence a young man of a mighty pleasant humor and marvelously adroit in all he had a mind to do, astute and plausible, who was called Maso del Saggio, and who, hearing certain traits of Calandrino's simplicity, determined to amuse himself at his expense by putting off some cheat on him or causing him believe some strange thing. He chanced one day to come upon him in a church of San Giovanni and seeing him intent upon the carved work and paintings of the pyx, which is upon the altar of the said church and which had then not long been placed there, he judged the place and time opportune for carrying his intent into execution. Accordingly, acquainting a friend of his with that which he purposed to do, they both drew near unto the place where Calandrino sat alone and feigning not to see him, fell a-discoursing together of the virtues of divers stones, whereof Maso spoke as authoritatively as if he had been a great and famous lapidary.

Calandrino gave ear to their talk and presently, seeing that it was no secret, he rose to his feet and joined himself to them, to the no small satisfaction of Maso, who, pursuing his discourse, was asked by Calandrino where these wonder-working stones were to be found. Maso replied that the

most of them were found in Berlinzone, a city of the Basques, in a country called Bengodi, where the vines are tied up with sausages and a goose is to be had for a farthing and a gosling into the bargain, and that there was a mountain all of grated Parmesan cheese, whereon abode folk who did nothing but make macaroni and ravioli and cook them in capon-broth, after which they threw them down thence and whoso got most thereof had most; and that hard by ran a rivulet of vernage, the best ever was drunk, without a drop of water therein. "Marry," cried Calandrino, "that were a fine country; but tell me, what is done with the capons that they boil for broth?" Quoth Maso, "The Basques eat them all." Then said Calandrino, "Wast thou ever there?" "Was I ever there, quotha!" replied Maso. "If I have been there once, I have been there a thousand times." "And how many miles is it distant hence?" asked Calandrino; and Maso, "How many? a million or more; you might count them all night and not know." "Then," said Calandrino, "it must be farther off than the Abruzzi?" "Ay, indeed," answered Maso; "it is a trifle farther."

Calandrino, like a simpleton as he was, hearing Maso tell all this with an assured air and without laughing, gave such credence thereto as can be given to whatsoever verity is most manifest and so, holding it for truth, said, "That is overfar for my money; though, were it nearer, I tell thee aright I would go thither with thee once upon a time, if but to see the macaroni come tumbling headlong down and take my fill thereof. But tell me, God keep thee merry, is there none of those wonder-working stones to be found in these parts?" "Ay is there," answered Maso; "there be two kinds of stones of very great virtue found here; the first are the grits of Settignano and Montisci, by virtue whereof, when they are wrought into millstones, flour is made; wherefore it is said in those parts that grace cometh from God and millstones from Montisci; but there is such great plenty of these grits that they are as little prized with us as emeralds with the folk over yonder, where they have mountains of them bigger than Mount Morello, which shine in the middle of the night, I warrant thee. And thou

must know that whoso should cause set fine and perfect millstones, before they are pierced, in rings and carry them to the Soldan might have for them what he would. The other is what we lapidaries call Heliotrope, a stone of exceeding great virtue, for that whoso hath it about him is not seen of any other person whereas he is not, what while he holdeth it." Quoth Calandrino, "These be indeed great virtues; but where is this second stone found?" To which Maso replied that it was commonly found in the Mugnone. "What bigness is this stone," asked Calandrino, "and what is its color?" Quoth Maso, "It is of various sizes, some more and some less; but all are well nigh black of color."

Calandrino noted all this in himself and feigning to have otherwhat to do, took leave of Maso, inwardly determined to go seek the stone in question, but bethought himself not to do it without the knowledge of Bruno and Buffalmacco, whom he most particularly affected. Accordingly he addressed himself to seek for them, so they might, without delay and before any else, set about the search, and spent all the rest of the morning seeking them. At last, when it was past none, he remembered him that they were a-work in the Ladies' Convent at Faenza and leaving all his other business, he betook himself thither well nigh at a run, notwithstanding the great heat. As soon as he saw them, he called them and bespoke them thus: "Comrades, an you will hearken to me, we may become the richest men in all Florence, for that I have learned from a man worthy of belief that in the Mugnone is to be found a stone, which whoso carrieth about him is not seen of any; wherefore meseemeth we were best go thither in quest thereof without delay, ere any forestall us. We shall certainly find it, for that I know it well, and when we have gotten it, what have we to do but put it in our poke and getting us to the money-changers' tables, which you know stand still laden with groats and florins, take as much as we will thereof? None will see us, and so may we grow rich of a sudden, without having to smear walls all day long, snail-fashion."

Bruno and Buffalmacco, hearing this, fell a-laughing in their sleeves and eyeing each other askance, made a show of exceeding wonderment and praised Calandrino's counsel,

but Bruno asked how the stone in question was called. Calandrino, who was a clodpated fellow, had already forgotten the name, wherefore quoth he, "What have we to do with the name, since we know the virtue of the stone? Meseemeth we were best go about the quest without more ado." "Well, then," said Bruno, "how is it fashioned?" "It is of all fashions," replied Calandrino; "but all are well nigh black; wherefore meseemeth that what we have to do is to gather up all the black stones we see, till we happen upon the right. So let us lose no time, but get us gone." Quoth Bruno, "Wait awhile," and turning to his comrade, said, "Methinketh Calandrino saith well; but meseemeth this is no season for the search, for that the sun is high and shineth full upon the Mugnone, where it hath dried all the stones, so that certain of those that be there appear presently white, which of a morning, ere the sun have dried them, show black; more by token that, to-day being a working day, there be many folk, on one occasion or another, abroad along the banks, who, seeing us, may guess what we are about and maybe do likewise, whereby the stone may come to their hands and we shall have lost the trot for the amble. Meseemeth (an you be of the same way of thinking) that this is a business to be undertaken of a morning, whenas the black may be the better known from the white, and of a holiday, when there will be none there to see us."

Buffalmacco commended Bruno's counsel and Calandrino fell in therewith: wherefore they agreed to go seek for the stone all three on the following Sunday morning, and Calandrino besought them over all else not to say a word of the matter to any one alive, for that it had been imparted to him in confidence, and after told them that which he had heard tell of the land of Bengodi, affirming with an oath that it was as he said. As soon as he had taken his leave, the two others agreed with each other what they should do in the matter and Calandrino impatiently awaited the Sunday morning, which being come, he arose at break of day and called his friends, with whom he sallied forth of the city by the San Gallo gate and descending into the bed of the Mugnone, began to go searching down stream for the stone. Calandrino, as the eagerest of the three, went

on before, skipping nimbly hither and thither, and whenever he espied any black stone, he pounced upon it and picking it up, thrust it into his bosom. His comrades followed after him, picking up now one stone and now another; but Calandrino had not gone far before he had his bosom full of stones; wherefore, gathering up the skirts of his gown, which was not cut Flanders fashion, he tucked them well into his sursingle all around and made an ample lap thereof. However, it was no great while ere he had filled it and making a lap on like wise of his mantle, soon filled this also with stones. Presently, the two others seeing that he had gotten his load and that dinner-time drew nigh, quoth Bruno to Buffalmacco, in accordance with the plan concerted between them, "Where is Calandrino?" Buffalmacco, who saw him hard by, turned about and looking now here and now there, answered, "I know not; but he was before us but now." "But now, quotha!" cried Bruno. "I warrant you he is presently at home at dinner and hath left us to play the fool here, seeking black stones down the Mugnone." "Egad," rejoined Buffalmacco, "he hath done well to make mock of us and leave us here, since we were fools enough to credit him. Marry, who but we had been simple enough to believe that a stone of such virtue was to be found in the Mugnone?"

Calandrino, hearing this, concluded that the Heliotrope had fallen into his hands and that by virtue thereof they saw him not, albeit he was present with them, and rejoiced beyond measure at such a piece of good luck, answered them not a word, but determined to return; wherefore, turning back, he set off homeward. Buffalmacco, seeing this, said to Bruno, "What shall we do? Why do we not get us gone?" Whereto Bruno answered, "Let us begone; but I vow to God that Calandrino shall never again serve me thus, and were I presently near him as I have been all the morning, I would give him such a clout on the shins with this stone that he should have cause to remember this trick for maybe a month to come." To say this and to let fly at Calandrino's shins with the stone were one and the same thing; and the latter, feeling the pain, lifted up his leg and began to puff and blow, but yet held his peace and

fared on. Presently Buffalmacco took one of the flints he had picked up and said to Bruno, "Look at this fine flint; here should go for Calandrino's loins!" So saying, he let fly and dealt him a sore rap in the small of the back with the stone. Brief, on this wise, now with one word and now wiht another, they went pelting him up the Mugnone till they came to the San Gallo gate, where they threw down the stones they had gathered and halted awhile at the custom heuse.

The officers, forewarned by them, feigned not to see Calandrino and let him pass, laughing heartily at the jest, whilst he, without stopping, made straight for his house, which was near the Canto alla Macina, and fortune so far favored the cheat that none accosted him, as he came up the stream and after through the city, as, indeed, he met with few, for that well nigh every one was at dinner. Accordingly, he reached his house, thus laden, and as chance would have it, his wife, a fair and virtuous lady, by name Mistress Tessa, was at the stairhead. Seeing him come and somewhat provoked at his long tarriance, she began to rail at him, saying, "Devil take the man! Wilt thou never think to come home betimes? All the folk have already dined whenas thou comest back to dinner." Calandrino, hearing this and finding that he was seen, was overwhelmed with chagrin and vexation and cried out, "Alack, wicked woman that thou art, wast thou there? Thou hast undone me; but, by God His faith, I will pay thee therefor!" Therewithal he ran up to a little saloon he had and there disburthened himself of the mass of stones he had brought home; then, running in a fury at his wife, he laid hold of her by the hair and throwing her down at his feet, cuffed and kicked her in every part as long as he could wag his arms and legs, without leaving her a hair on her head or a bone in her body that was not beaten to a mash, nor did it avail her aught to cry him mercy with clasped hands.

Meanwhile Bruno and Buffalmacco, after laughing awhile with the keepers of the gate, proceeded with slow step to follow Calandrino afar off and presently coming to the door of his house, heard the cruel beating he was in act to give his wife; whereupon, making a show of having but

then come back, they called Calandrino, who came to the window, all asweat and red with anger and vexation, and prayed them come up to him. Accordingly, they went up, making believe to be somewhat vexed, and seeing the room full of stones and the lady, all torn and disheveled and black and blue in the face for bruises, weeping piteously in one corner of the room, whilst Calandrino sat in another, untrussed and panting like one forspent, eyed them awhile, then said, "What is this, Calandrino? Art thou for building, that we see all these stones here? And Mistress Tessa, what aileth her? It seemeth thou hast beaten her. What is all this ado?" Calandrino, outwearied with the weight of the stones and the fury with which he had beaten his wife, no less than with chagrin for the luck which himseemed he had lost, could not muster breath to given them aught but broken words in reply; wherefore, as he delayed to answer, Buffalmacco went on, "Harkye, Calandrino, whatever other cause for anger thou mightest have had, thou shouldest not have fooled us as thou hast done, in that, after thou hadst carried us off to seek with thee for the wonder-working stone, thou leftest us in the Mugnone, like a couple of gulls, and madest off home, without saying so much as God be with you or Devil; the which we take exceeding ill; but assuredly this shall be the last trick thou shalt ever play us."

Therewithal, Calandrino, enforcing himself, answered, "Comrades, be not angered; the case standeth otherwise than as you deemed. I (unlucky wretch that I am!) had found the stone in question, and you shall hear if I tell truth. When first you questioned one another of me, I was less than half a score yards distant from you; but, seeing that you made off and saw me not, I went on before you and came back hither, still keeping a little in front of you." Then, beginning from the beginning, he recounted to them all that they had said and done, first and last, and showed them how the stones had served his back and shins; after which, "And I may tell you," continued he, "that, whenas I entered in at the gate, with all these stones about me which you see here, there was nothing said to me, albeit you know how vexatious and tiresome these

gatekeepers use to be in wanting to see everything; more by token that I met by the way several of my friends and gossips, who are still wont to accost me and invite me to drink; but none of them said a word to me, no, nor half a word, as those who saw me not. At last, being come home hither, this accursed devil of a woman presented herself before me, for that, as you know, women cause everything lose its virtue, wherefore I, who might else have called myself the luckiest man in Florence, am become the most unlucky. For this I have beaten her as long as I could wag my fists and I know not what hindereth me from slitting her weasand, accursed by the hour when first I saw her and when she came to me in this house." Then, flaming out into fresh anger, he offered to rise and beat her anew.

Bruno and Buffalmacco, hearing all this, made believe to marvel exceedingly and often confirmed that which Calandrino said, albeit they had the while so great a mind to laugh that they were like to burst; but, seeing him start up in a rage to beat his wife again, they rose upon him and withheld him, avouching that the lady was nowise at fault, but that he had only himself to blame for that which had happened, since he knew that women caused things lose their virtue and had not bidden her beware of appearing before him that day, and that God had bereft him of foresight to provide against this, either for that the adventure was not to be his or because he had had it in mind to cozen his comrades, to whom he should have discovered the matter, as soon as he perceived that he had found the stone. Brief, after many words, they made peace, not without much ado, between him and the woebegone lady and went their ways, leaving him disconsolate, with the house full of stones.



CALANDRINO AND THE STOLEN PIG

Bruno and Buffalmacco, having stolen a pig from Calandrino, make him try the ordeal with ginger boluses and sack and give him (instead of the ginger) two dog-balls compounded with aloes, whereby it appeareth that he himself hath had the pig and they make him pay blackmail, an he would not have them tell his wife.

WHO Calandrino, Bruno and Buffalmacco were I need not explain to you, for that you have already heard it well enough; wherefore, to proceed with my story, I must tell you that Calandrino owned a little farm at no great distance from Florence, that he had had to his wife's dowry. From this farm, amongst other things that he got thence, he had every year a pig, and it was his wont still to betake himself thither, he and his wife, and kill the pig and have it salted on the spot. It chanced one year that, his wife being somewhat ailing, he went himself to kill the pig, which Bruno and Buffalmacco hearing and knowing that his wife was not gone to the farm with him, they repaired to a priest, a very great friend of theirs and a neighbor of Calandrino, to sojourn some days with him. Now Calandrino had that very morning killed the pig and seeing them with the priest, called to them saying, "You are welcome. I would fain have you see what a good husband I am." Then carrying them into the house, he showed them the pig, which they seeing to be a very fine one and understanding from Calandrino that he meant to salt it down for his family, "Good lack," quoth Bruno to him, "what a ninny thou art! Sell it and let us make merry with the price, and tell thy wife that it hath been stolen from thee." "Nay," answered Calandrino, "she would never believe it and would drive me out of the house. Spare your pains, for I will never do it." And many were the words, but they availed nothing.

Calandrino invited them to supper, but with so ill a grace that they refused to sup there and took their leave of him; whereupon quoth Bruno and Buffalmacco, "What sayst

thou to stealing yonder pig from him to-night?" "Marry," replied the other, "how can we do it?" Quoth Bruno, "I can see how well enough, an he remove it not from where it was but now." "Then," rejoined his companion, "let us do it. Why should we not? And after we will make merry over it with the parson here." The priest answered that he would well, and Bruno said, "Here must some little art be used. Thou knowest, Buffalmacco, how niggardly Calandrino is and how gladly he drinketh when others pay; let us go and carry him to the tavern, where the priest shall make believe to pay the whole scot in our honor nor suffer him pay aught. Calandrino will soon grow fuddled and then we can manage it lightly enough, for that he is alone in the house." As he said, so they did and Calandrino seeing that the priest suffered none to pay, gave himself up to drinking and took in a good load, albeit it needed no great matter to make him drunk. It was pretty late at night when they left the tavern and Calandrino, without troubling himself about supper, went straight home, where, thinking to have shut the door, he left it open and betook himself to bed. Buffalmacco and Bruno went off to sup with the priest and after supper repaired quietly to Calandrino's house, carrying with them certain implements wherewithal to break in whereas Bruno had appointed it; but, finding the door open, they entered and unhooking the pig, carried it off to the priest's house, where they laid it up and betook themselves to sleep.

On the morrow, Calandrino, having slept off the fumes of the wine, arose in the morning and going down, missed his pig and saw the door open; whereupon he questioned this one and that if they knew who had taken it and getting no news of it, began to make a great outcry, saying, "Woe is me, miserable wretch that I am!" for that the pig had been stolen from him. As soon as Bruno and Buffalmacco were risen, they repaired to Calandrino's house, to hear what he should say anent the pig, and he no sooner saw them than he called out to them, well nigh weeping, and said, "Woe's me, comrades mine; my pig hath been stolen from me!" Whereupon Bruno came up to him and said softly, "It is a marvel that thou hast been wise for once."

"Alack," replied Calandrino, "indeed I say sooth." "That's the thing to say," quoth Bruno. "Make a great outcry, so it may well appear that it is e'en as thou sayst." Therewithal Calandrino bawled out yet louder, saying, "Cock's body, I tell thee it hath been stolen from me in good earnest!" "Good, good," replied Bruno; "that's the way to speak; cry out lustily, make thyself well heard, so it may seem true." Quoth Calandrino, "Thou wouldst make me give my soul to the Fiend! I tell thee and thou believest me not. May I be strung up by the neck an it have not been stolen from me!" "Good lack!" cried Bruno. "How can that be? I saw it here but yesterday. Thinkest thou to make me believe that it hath flown away?" Quoth Calandrino, "It is as I tell thee." "Good lack," repeated Bruno, "can it be?" "Certes," replied Calandrino, "it is so, more by token that I am undone and know not how I shall return home. My wife will never believe me; or even if she do, I shall have no peace with her this year to come." Quoth Bruno, "So God save me, this is ill done, if it be true; but thou knowest, Calandrino, I lessoned thee yesterday to say thus and I would not have thee at once cozen thy wife and us." Therewithal Calandrino fell to crying out and saying, "Alack, why will you drive me to desperation and make me blaspheme God and the Saints? I tell you the pig was stolen from me yesternight."

Then said Buffalmacco, "If it be so indeed, we must cast about for a means of having it again, an we may contrive it." "But what means," asked Calandrino, "can we find?" Quoth Buffalmacco, "We may be sure that there hath come none from the Indies to rob thee of thy pig; the thief must have been some one of thy neighbors. An thou canst make shift to assemble them, I know how to work the ordeal by bread and cheese and we will presently see for certain who hath had it." "Ay," put in Bruno, "thou wouldst make a fine thing of bread and cheese with such gentry as we have about here, for one of them I am certain hath had the pig, and he would smoke the trap and would not come." "How, then, shall we do?" asked Buffalmacco, and Bruno said, "We must e'en do it with ginger boluses and good vernage and invite them to drink. They will

suspect nothing and come, and the ginger boluses can be blessed even as the bread and cheese." Quoth Buffalmacco, "Indeed, thou sayst sooth. What sayst thou, Calandrino? Shall's do't?" "Nay," replied the gull, "I pray you thereof for the love of God; for, did I but know who hath had it, I should hold myself half consoled." "Marry, then," said Bruno, "I am ready to go for Florence to oblige thee for the things aforesaid, so thou wilt give me the money." Now Calandrino had maybe forty shillings, which he gave him, and Bruno accordingly repaired to Florence to a friend of his, a druggist, of whom he bought a pound of fine ginger boluses and caused compound a couple of dog-balls with fresh confect of hepatic aloes; after which he let cover these latter with sugar like the others, and set thereon a privy mark by which he might very well know them, so he should not mistake them nor change them. Then, buying a flask of good vernage, he returned to Calandrino in the country and said to him, "Do thou to-morrow morning invite those whom thou suspectest to drink with thee; it is a holiday and all will willingly come. Meanwhile, Buffalmacco and I will to-night make the conjuration over the pills and bring them to thee to-morrow morning at home; and for the love of thee I will administer them myself and do and say that which is to be said and done."

Calandrino did as he said and assembled on the following morning a goodly company of such young Florentines as were presently about the village and of husbandmen; whereupon Bruno and Buffalmacco came with a box of pills and the flask of wine and made the folk stand in a ring. Then said Bruno, "Gentlemen, needs must I tell you the reason wherefore you are here, so that, if ought betide that please you not, you may have no cause to complain of me. Calandrino here was robbed yesternight of a fine pig, nor can he find who hath had it; and for that none other than some one of us who are here can have stolen it from him, he proffereth each of you, that he may discover who hath had it, one of these pills to eat and a draught of wine. Now you must know that he who hath had the pig will not be able to swallow the pill; nay, it will seem to him more bitter than poison and he will spit it out; where-

fore, rather than that shame be done him in the presence of so many, he were better tell it to the parson by way of confession and I will proceed no farther with this matter."

All who were there declared that they would willingly eat of the pills, whereupon Bruno ranged them in order and set Calandrino among them; then, beginning at one end of the line, he proceeded to give each his bolus, and whenas he came over against Calandrino, he took one of the dog-balls and put it into his hand. Calandrino clapped it incontinent into his mouth and began to chew it; but no sooner did his tongue taste the aloes, than he spat it out again, being unable to brook the bitterness. Meanwhile, each was looking other in the face, to see who should spit out his bolus, and whilst Bruno, not having made an end of serving them out, went on to do so, feigning to pay no heed to Calandrino's doings, he heard say behind him, "How now, Calandrino? What meaneth this?" Whereupon he turned suddenly round and seeing that Calandrino had spat out his bolus, said, "Stay, maybe somewhat else hath caused him spit it out. Take another of them." Then, taking the other dog-ball, he thrust it into Calandrino's mouth and went on to finish giving out the rest. If the first ball seemed bitter to Calandrino, the second was bitterer yet; but, being ashamed to spit it out, he kept it awhile in his mouth, chewing it and shedding tears that seemed hazel-nuts, so big they were, till at last, unable to hold out longer, he cast it forth, like as he had the first. Meanwhile Buffalmacco and Bruno gave the company to drink, and all, seeing this, declared that Calandrino had certainly stolen the pig from himself; nay, there were those there who rated him roundly.

After they were all gone, and the two rogues left alone with Calandrino, Buffalmacco said to him, "I still had it for certain that it was thou tookst the pig thyself and wouldst fain make us believe that it had been stolen from thee, to escape giving us one poor while to drink of the monies thou hadst for it." Calandrino, who was not yet quit of the bitter taste of the aloes, began to swear that he had not had it, and Buffalmacco said, "But in good earnest, comrade, what gottest thou for it? Was it six

florins?" Calandrino, hearing this, began to wax desperate, and Bruno said, "Harkye, Calandrino, there was such an one in the company that ate and drank with us, who told me that thou hast a wench over yonder, whom thou keepest for thy pleasure and to whom thou givest whatsoever thou canst scrape together, and that he held it for certain that thou hadst sent her the pig. Thou hast learned of late to play pranks of this kind; thou carriedst us off t'other day down the Mugnone, picking up black stones, and whenas thou hadst gotten us aboard ship without biscuit, thou madest off and wouldst after have us believe that thou hadst found the magic stone; and now on like wise thou thinkest, by dint of oaths, to make us believe that the pig, which thou hast given away or more like sold, hath been stolen from thee. But we are used to thy tricks and know them; thou shalt not avail to play us any more of them, and to be plain with thee, since we have been at pains to make the conjuration, we mean that thou shalt give us two pairs of capons; else will we tell Mistress Tessa everything." Calandrino, seeing that he was not believed and himseeming he had had vexation enough, without having his wife's scolding into the bargain, gave them two pairs of capons, which they carried off to Florence, after they had salted the pig, leaving Calandrino to digest the loss and the flouting as best he might.



THE ROBBER GHINO AND THE ABBOT OF CLUNY

Ghino di Tacco taketh the Abbot of Cluny and having cured him of the stomach-complaint, letteth him go; whereupon the abbot, returning to the court of Rome, reconcileth him with Pope Boniface and maketh him a prior of the Hospitallers.

GHINO DI TACCO, a man very famous for his cruelty and his robberies, being expelled from Siena and at feud with the Counts of Santa Fiore, raised Radicofani against the Church of Rome and taking up his sojourn there, caused his swashbucklers despoil whosoever passed through the surrounding country. Now, Boniface the Eighth being Pope in Rome, there came to court the Abbot of Cluny, who is believed to be one of the richest prelates in the world, and having there marred his stomach, he was advised by the physicians to repair to the baths of Siena and he would without fail be cured. Accordingly, having gotten the pope's leave, he set out on his way thither in great pomp of gear and baggage and horses and servitors, unrecking of Ghino's [ill] report. The latter, hearing of his coming, spread his nets and hemmed him and all his household and gear about in a strait place, without letting a single footboy escape. This done, he dispatched to the abbot one, the most sufficient, of his men, well accompanied, who in his name very lovingly prayed him be pleased to light down and sojourn with the aforesaid Ghino in his castle. The abbot, hearing this, answered furiously that he would nowise do it, having nought to do with Ghino, but that he would fare on and would fain see who should forbid his passage. Whereto quoth the messenger on humble wise, "Sir, you are come into parts where, barring God His might, there is nothing to fear for us and where excommunications and interdicts are all excommunicated; wherefore, may it please you, you were best comply with Ghino in this."

During this parley, the whole place had been encompassed about with men-at-arms; wherefore the abbot, seeing himself taken with his men, betook himself, sore against his will, to the castle, in company with the ambassador, and

with him all his household and gear, and alighting there, was, by Ghino's orders, lodged all alone in a very dark and mean little chamber in one of the pavilions, whilst every one else was well enough accommodated, according to his quality, about the castle and the horses and all the gear put in safety, without aught thereof being touched. This done, Ghino betook himself to the abbot and said to him, "Sir, Ghino, whose guest you are, sendeth to you, praying you acquaint him whither you are bound and on what occasion." The abbot, like a wise man, had by this laid by his pride and told him whither he went and why. Ghino, hearing this, took his leave and bethought himself to go about to cure him without baths. Accordingly, he let keep a great fire still burning in the little room and causing guard the place well, returned not to the abbot till the following morning, when he brought him, in a very white napkin, two slices of toasted bread and a great beaker of his own Corniglia vernage and bespoke him thus, "Sir, when Ghino was young, he studied medicine and saith that he learned there was no better remedy for the stomach-complaint than that which he purposeth to apply to you and of which these things that I bring you are the beginning; wherefore do you take them and refresh yourself."

The abbot, whose hunger was greater than his desire to bandy words, ate the bread and drank the wine, though he did it with an ill will, and after made many haughty speeches, asking and counseling of many things and demanding in particular to see Ghino. The latter, hearing this talk, let part of it pass as idle and answered the rest very courteously, avouching that Ghino would visit him as quickliest he might. This said, he took his leave of him and returned not until the ensuing day, when he brought him as much toasted bread and as much malmsey; and so he kept him several days, till such time as he perceived that he had eaten some dried beans, which he had of intent aforethought brought secretly thither and left there; whereupon he asked him, on Ghino's part, how he found himself about the stomach. The abbot answered, "Meseemeth I should fare well, were I but out of his hands; and after that, I have no greater desire than to eat, so well have

his remedies cured me." Thereupon Ghino caused the abbot's own people array him a goodly chamber with his own gear and let make ready a magnificent banquet, to which he bade the prelate's whole household, together with many folk of the burgh. Next morning, he betook himself to the abbot and said to him, "Sir, since you feel yourself well, it is time to leave the infirmary." Then, taking him by the hand, he brought him to the chamber prepared for him and leaving him there in company of his own people, occupied himself with caring that the banquet should be a magnificent one.

The abbot solaced himself awhile with his men and told them what his life had been since his capture, whilst they, on the other hand, avouched themselves all to have been wonderwell entreated of Ghino. The eating-hour come, the abbot and the rest were well and orderly served with goodly viands and fine wines, without Ghino yet letting himself be known of the prelate; but, after the latter had abidden some days on this wise, the outlaw, having let bring all his gear into one saloon and all his horses, down to the sorriest rouncey, into a courtyard that was under the windows thereof, betook himself to him and asked him how he did and if he deemed himself strong enough to take horse. The abbot answered that he was strong enough and quite recovered of his stomach-complaint and that he should fare perfectly well, once he should be out of Ghino's hands. Ghino then brought him into the saloon, wherein was his gear and all his train, and carrying him to a window, whence he might see all his horses, said, "My lord abbot, you must know that it was the being a gentleman and expelled from his house and poor and the having many and puissant enemies, and not evilness of mind, that brought Ghino di Tacco (who is none other than myself) to be, for the defense of his life and his nobility, a highway-robber and an enemy of the court of Rome. Nevertheless, for that you seem to me a worthy gentleman, I purpose not, now that I have cured you of your stomach-complaint, to use you as I would another, from whom, he being in my hands as you are, I would take for myself such part of his goods as seemed well to me; nay, it is my intent that you, having

regard to my need, shall appoint to me such part of your goods as you yourself will. It is all here before you in its entirety and your horses you may from this window see in the courtyard; take, therefore, both part and all, as it pleaseth you, and from this time forth be it at your pleasure to go or stay."

The abbot marveled to hear such generous words from a highway-robber and was exceeding well pleased therewith, insomuch that, his anger and despite being of a sudden fallen, nay, changed into goodwill, he became Ghino's hearty friend and ran to embrace him, saying, "I vow to God that, to gain the friendship of a man such as I presently judge thee to be, I would gladly consent to suffer a far greater affront than that which meseemed but now thou hadst done me. Accursed be fortune that constrained thee to so damnable a trade!" Then, letting take of his many goods but a very few necessary things, and the like of his horses, he left all the rest to Ghino and returned to Rome. The pope had had news of the taking of the abbot and albeit it had given him sore concern, he asked him, when he saw him, how the baths had profited him; whereto he replied, smiling, "Holy Father, I found a worthy physician nearer than at the baths, who hath excellently well cured me;" and told him how, whereat the pope laughed, and the abbot, following on his speech and moved by a magnanimous spirit, craved a boon of him. The pope, thinking he would demand otherwhat, freely offered to do that which he should ask; and the abbot said, "Holy Father, that which I mean to ask of you is that you restore your favor to Ghino di Tacco, my physician, for that, of all men of worth and high account whom I ever knew, he is certes one of the most deserving; and for this ill that he doth, I hold it much more fortune's fault than his; the which if you change by bestowing on him somewhat whereby he may live according to his condition, I doubt not anywise but you will, in brief space of time, deem of him even as I do." The pope, who was great of soul and a lover of men of worth, hearing this, replied that he would gladly do it, an Ghino were indeed of such account as the abbot avouched, and bade the latter cause him come thither in

all security. Accordingly, Ghino, at the abbot's instance, came to court, upon that assurance, nor had he been long about the pope's person ere the latter reputed him a man of worth and taking him into favor, bestowed on him a grand priory of those of the Hospitallers, having first let make him a knight of that order; which office he held whilst he lived, still approving himself a loyal friend and servant of Holy Church and of the Abbot of Cluny.



THE DUMB GARDENER

Masetto of Lamporecchio feigneth himself dumb and becometh gardener to a convent of women, who all flock to him.

THERE was a convent of women, very famous for sanctity wherein no great while ago, there being then no more than eight nuns and an abbess, all young, in the nunnery, a poor silly dolt of a fellow was gardener of a very goodly garden of theirs, who, being discontent with his wage, settled his accounts with the ladies' bailiff and returned to Lamporecchio, whence he came. There, amongst others who welcomed him home, was a young laboring man, stout and robust and (for a countryman) a well-favored fellow, by name Masetto, who asked him where he had been so long. The good man, whose name was Nuto, told him, whereupon Masetto asked him in what he had served the convent, and he, "I tended a great and goodly garden of theirs, and moreover I went whiles to the coppice for faggots and drew water and did other such small matters of service; but the nuns gave me so little wage that I could scarce find me in shoon withal. Besides, they are all young and methinketh they are possessed of the devil, for there was no doing anything to their liking; nay, when I was at work whiles in the hortyard, quoth one, "Set this here," and another, "Set that here," and a third snatched the spade from my hand, saying, "That is naught;" brief, they gave me so much vexation that I would leave work be and begone out of the hortyard; insomuch that, what with one thing and what with another, I would abide there no longer and took myself off. When I came away, their bailiff besought me, an I could lay my hand on any one apt unto that service, to send the man to him, and I promised it him; but may God make him sound of the loins as he whom I shall get him, else will I send him none at all!" Masetto, hearing this, was taken with so great a desire to be with these nuns that he was all consumed therewith, judging from Nuto's words that he might avail to compass somewhat of that which he desired.

However, foreseeing that he would fail of his purpose, if he discovered aught thereof to Nuto, he said to the latter, "Egad, thou didst well to come away. How is a man to live with women? He were better abide with devils. Six times out of seven they know not what they would have themselves." But, after they had made an end of their talk, Masetto began to cast about what means he should take to be with them and feeling himself well able to do the offices of which Nuto had spoken, he had no fear of being refused on that head, but misdoubted him he might not be received, for that he was young and well-looking. Wherefore, after pondering many things in himself, he bethought himself thus: "The place is far hence and none knoweth me there, an I can but make a show of being dumb, I shall for certain be received there." Having fixed upon this device, he set out with an axe he had about his neck, without telling any whither he was bound, and betook himself, in the guise of a beggarman, to the convent, where being come, he entered in and as luck would have it, found the bailiff in the courtyard. Him he accosted with signs such as dumb folk use and made a show of asking food of him for the love of God and that in return he would, an it were needed, cleave wood for him. The bailiff willingly gave him to eat and after set before him divers logs that Nuto had not availed to cleave, but of all which Masetto, who was very strong, made a speedy despatch. By and by, the bailiff, having occasion to go to the coppice, carried him thither and put him to cutting faggots; after which, setting the ass before him, he gave him to understand by signs that he was to bring them home. This he did very well; wherefore the bailiff kept him there some days, so he might have him do certain things for which he had occasion. One day it chanced that the abbess saw him and asked the bailiff who he was. "Madam," answered he, "this is a poor deaf and dumb man, who came hither the other day to ask an alms; so I took him in out of charity and have made him do sundry things of which we had need. If he knew how to till the hortyard and chose to abide with us, I believe we should get good service of him; for that we lack such an one and he is strong and we could make what

we would of him; more by token that you would have no occasion to fear his playing the fool with yonder lasses of yours." "I' faith," rejoined the abbess, "thou sayest sooth. Learn if he knoweth how to till and study to keep him here; give him a pair of shoes and some old hood or other and make much of him, caress him, give him plenty to eat." Which the bailiff promised to do. Masetto was not so far distant but he heard all this, making a show the while of sweeping the courtyard, and said merrily in himself, "An you put me therein, I will till you your hortyard as it was never tilled yet." Accordingly, the bailiff, seeing that he knew right well how to work, asked him by signs if he had a mind to abide there and he replied on like wise that he would do whatsoever he wished; whereupon the bailiff engaged him and charged him till the hortyard, showing him what he was to do; after which he went about other business of the convent and left him. Presently, as Masetto went working one day after another, the nuns fell to plaguing him and making mock of him, as ofttimes it betideth that folk do with mutes, and bespoke him the naughtiest words in the world, thinking he understood them not; whereof the abbess, mayhap supposing him to be tailless as well as tongueless, recked little or nothing. It chanced one day, however, that, as he rested himself after a hard morning's work, two young nuns, who went about the garden, drew near the place where he lay and fell to looking upon him, whilst he made a show of sleeping. Presently quoth one who was somewhat the bolder of the twain to the other, "If I thought thou wouldst keep my counsel, I would tell thee a thought which I have once and again had and which might perchance profit thee also." "Speak in all assurance," answered the other, "for certes I will never tell it to any." Then said the forward wench, "I know not if thou have ever considered how straitly we are kept and how no man dare ever enter here, save the bailiff, who is old, and yonder dumb fellow; and I have again and again heard ladies, who come to visit us, say that all other delights in the world are but toys in comparison with that which a woman enjoyeth, whenas she hath to do with a man. Wherefore I have often had it in mind to make

trial with this mute, since with others I may not, if it be so. And indeed he is the best in the world to that end, for that, e'en if he would, he could not nor might tell it again. Thou seest he is a poor silly lout of a lad, who hath overgrown his wit, and I would fain hear how thou deemest of the thing." "Alack!" rejoined the other, "what is this thou sayest? Knowest thou not that we have promised our virginity to God?" "Oh, as for that," answered the first, "how many things are promised Him all day long, whereof not one is fulfilled unto Him! An we have promised it Him, let Him find Himself another or others to perform it to Him." "Or if," went on her fellow, "we should prove with child, how would it go then?" Quoth the other, "Thou beginnest to take thought unto ill ere it cometh; when that betideth, then will we look to it; there will be a thousand ways for us of doing so that it shall never be known, provided we ourselves tell it not." The other, hearing this, and having now a greater itch than her companion to prove what manner beast a man was, said, "Well, then, how shall we do?" Quoth the first, "Thou seest it is nigh upon none and methinketh the sisters are all asleep, save only ourselves; let us look about the hortyard if there be any there, and if there be none, what have we to do but to take him by the hand and carry him into yonder hut, whereas he harboreth against the rain, and there let one of us abide with him, whilst the other keepeth watch? He is so simple that he will do whatever we will." Masetto heard all this talk, and, disposed to compliance, waited but to be taken by one of the nuns. The latter having looked well all about and satisfied themselves that they could be seen from nowhere, she who had broached the matter came up to Masetto and aroused him, whereupon he rose incontinent to his feet. The nun took him coaxingly by the hand and led him, grinning like an idiot, to the hut, where, without overmuch pressing, he did what she would. Then, like a loyal comrade, having had her will, she gave place to her fellow, and Masetto, still feigning himself a simpleton, did their pleasure. Before they departed thence, each of the girls must needs once more prove how the mute could horse it, and after devising with each other, they

agreed that the thing was as delectable as they had heard, nay, more so. Accordingly, watching their opportunity, they went oftentimes at fitting seasons to divert themselves with the mute, till one day it chanced that one of their sisters, espying them in the act from the lattice of her cell, showed it to other twain. At first they talked of denouncing the culprits to the abbess, but, after, changing counsel and coming to an accord with the first two, they became sharers with them in Masetto's services, and to them the other three nuns were at divers times and by divers chances added as associates. Ultimately, the abbess, who had not yet gotten wind of these doings, walking one day alone in the garden, the heat being great, found Masetto (who had enough of a little fatigue by day, because of overmuch posting it by night) stretched out asleep under the shade of an almond-tree, and the wind lifting the forepart of his clothes, all abode discovered. The lady, beholding this and seeing herself alone, fell into that same appetite which had gotten hold of her nuns, and arousing Masetto, carried him to her chamber, where, to the no small discontent of the others, who complained loudly that the gardener came not to till the hortyard, she kept him several days, proving and reproving that delight which she had erst been wont to blame in others. At last she sent him back to his own lodging, but was fain to have him often again and as, moreover, she required of him more than her share, Masetto, unable to satisfy so many, bethought himself that his playing the mute might, an it endured longer, result in his exceeding great hurt. Wherefore, being one night with the abbess, he gave loose to his tongue and bespoke her thus: "Madam, I have heard say that one cock sufficeth unto half a score hens, but that half a score men can ill or hardly satisfy one woman; whereas needs must I serve nine, and to this I can no wise endure; nay, for that which I have done up to now, I am come to such a pass that I can do neither little nor much; wherefore do ye either let me go in God's name or find a remedy for the matter." The abbess, hearing him speak whom she held dumb, was all amazed and said, "What is this? Methought thou wast dumb." "Madam," answered Masetto, "I was indeed dumb, not by nature,

but by reason of a malady which bereft me of speech, and only this very night for the first time do I feel it restored to me, wherefore I praise God as most I may." The lady believed this and asked him what he meant by saying that he had to serve nine. Masetto told her how the case stood, whereby she perceived that she had no nun but was far wiser than herself; but, like a discreet woman as she was, she resolved to take counsel with her nuns to find some means of arranging the matter, without letting Masetto go, so the convent might not be defamed by him. Accordingly, having openly confessed to one another that which had been secretly done of each, they all of one accord, with Masetto's consent, so ordered it that the people round about believed speech to have been restored to him, after he had long been mute, through their prayers and by the merits of the saint in whose name the convent was intituled, and their bailiff being lately dead, they made Masetto bailiff in his stead and apportioned his toils on such wise that he could endure them. Thereafter, albeit he begat upon them manikins galore, the thing was so discreetly ordered that nothing took vent thereof till after the death of the abbess, when Masetto began to grow old and had a mind to return home rich. The thing becoming known, enabled him lightly to accomplish his desire, and thus Masetto, having by his foresight contrived to employ his youth to good purpose, returned in his old age, rich and a father, without being at the pains or expense of rearing children, to the place whence he had set out with an axe about his neck, avouching that thus did Christ entreat whoso set horns to his cap.



THE EXPERIENCES OF RINALDO D'ASTI

Rinaldo d'Asti, having been robbed, maketh his way to Castel Guglielmo, where he is hospitably entertained by a widow lady and having made good his loss, returneth to his own house, safe and sound.

IN the days, then, of the Marquis Azzo of Ferrara, there came a merchant called Rinaldo d'Asti to Bologna on his occasions, which having despatched and returning homeward, it chanced that, as he issued forth of Ferrara and rode toward Verona, he fell in with certain folk who seemed merchants, but were in truth highwaymen and men of lewd life and condition, with whom he unwarily joined company and entered into discourse. They, seeing him to be a merchant and judging him to have monies about him, took counsel together to rob him, at the first opportunity that should offer; wherefore, that he might take no suspicion, they went devising with him, like decent peaceable folk, of things honest and seemly and of loyalty, ordering themselves toward him, in so far as they knew and could, with respect and complaisance, so that he deemed himself in great luck to have met with them, for that he was alone with a serving man of his on horseback.

Thus faring on and passing from one thing to another, as it chanceth in discourse, they presently fell to talking of the orisons that men offer up to God, and one of the highwaymen, who were three in number, said to Rinaldo, "And you, fair sir, what orison do you use to say on a journey?" Whereto he answered, "Sooth to say, I am but a plain man and little versed in these matters and have few orisons in hand; I live after the old fashion and let a couple of shillings pass for four-and-twenty pence. Nevertheless, I have still been wont, when on a journey, to say of a morning, what time I come forth of the inn, a Pater and an Ave for the soul of St. Julian's father and mother, after which I pray God and the saint to grant me a good lodging for the ensuing night. Many a time in my day have I, in the course of my journeyings, been in great perils,

from all of which I have escaped and have still found myself at night, to boot, in a place of safety and well lodged. Wherefore I firmly believe that St. Julian, in whose honor I say it, hath gotten me this favor of God; nor meseemeth should I fare well by day nor come to good harborage at night, except I had said it in the morning." "And did you say it this morning?" asked he who had put the question to him. "Ay did I," answered Rinaldo; whereupon quoth the other in himself, knowing well how the thing was to go, "May it stand thee in stead! For, an no hindrance betide us, methinketh thou art e'en like to lodge ill." Then, to Rinaldo, "I likewise," quoth he, "have travelled much and have never said this orison, albeit I have heard it greatly commended, nor ever hath it befallen me to lodge other than well; and this evening maybe you shall chance to see which will lodge the better, you who have said it or I who have not. True, I use, instead thereof, the *Dirupisti* or the *Intemerata* or the *De Profundis*, the which, according to that which a grandmother of mine used to tell me, are of singular virtue."

Discoursing thus of various matters and faring on their way, on the lookout the while for time and place apt unto their knavish purpose, they came, late in the day, to a place a little beyond Castel Guglielmo, where, at the fording of a river, the three rogues, seeing the hour advanced and the spot solitary and close shut in, fell upon Rinaldo and robbed him of money, clothes and horse. Then, leaving him afoot and in his shirt, they departed, saying, "Go see if thy St. Julian will give thee a good lodging this night, even as ours will assuredly do for us." And passing the stream, they went their ways. Rinaldo's servant, seeing him attacked, like a cowardly knave as he was, did nought to help him, but turning his horse's head, never drew bridle till he came to Castel Guglielmo and entering the town, took up his lodging there, without giving himself farther concern.

Rinaldo, left in his shirt and barefoot, it being very cold and snowing hard, knew not what to do and seeing the night already at hand, looked about him, trembling and chattering the while with his teeth, if there were any shelter to be seen there, where he might pass the night, so he

should not perish of cold; but, seeing none, for that a little before there had been war in those parts and everything had been burnt, set off at a run, spurred by the cold, towards Castel Guglielmo, knowing not withal if his servant were fled thither or elsewhere and thinking that, so he might but avail to enter therein, God would send him some relief. But darkness overtook him near a mile from the town, wherefore he arrived there so late that, the gates being shut and the drawbridges raised, he could get no admission. Thereupon, despairing and disconsolate, he looked about, weeping, for a place where he might shelter, so at the least it should not snow upon him, and chancing to espy a house that projected somewhat beyond the walls of the town, he determined to go bide thereunder till day. Accordingly, betaking himself thither, he found there a door, albeit it was shut, and gathering at foot thereof somewhat of straw that was thereon, he laid himself down there, tristful and woebegone, complaining sore to St. Julian and saying that this was not of the faith he had in him.

However, the saint had not lost sight of him and was not long in providing him with a good lodging. There was in the town a widow lady, as fair of favor as any woman living, whom the Marquis Azzo loved as his life and there kept at his disposition, and she abode in that same house, beneath the projection whereof Rinaldo had taken shelter. Now, as chance would have it, the Marquis had come to the town that day, thinking to lie the night with her, and had privily let make ready in her house a bath and a sumptuous supper. Everything being ready and nought awaited by the lady but the coming of the Marquis, it chanced that there came a serving-man to the gate, who brought him news, which obliged him to take horse forthright; wherefore, sending to tell his mistress not to expect him, he departed in haste. The lady, somewhat disconsolate at this, knowing not what to do, determined to enter the bath prepared for the Marquis and after sup and go to bed.

Accordingly she entered the bath, which was near the door, against which the wretched merchant was crouched without the city-wall; wherefore she, being therein, heard the weeping and trembling kept up by Rinaldo, who seemed

as he were grown a stork, and calling her maid, said to her, "Go up and look over the wall who is at the postern-foot and what he doth there." The maid went thither and aided by the clearness of the air, saw Rinaldo in his shirt and barefoot, sitting there, as hath been said, and trembling sore; whereupon she asked him who he was. He told her, as briefliest he might, who he was and how and why he was there, trembling the while on such wise that he could scarce form the words, and after fell to beseeching her piteously not to leave him there all night to perish of cold, [but to succor him,] an it might be. The maid was moved to pity of him and returning to her mistress, told her all. The lady, on like wise taking compassion on him and remembering that she had the key of the door aforesaid, which served whiles for the privy entrances of the Marquis, said, "Go softly and open to him; here is this supper and none to eat it and we have commodity enough for his lodging."

The maid, having greatly commended her mistress for this her humanity, went and opening to Rinaldo, brought him in; whereupon the lady, seeing him well nigh palsied with cold, said to him, "Quick, good man, enter this bath, which is yet warm." Rinaldo, without awaiting farther invitation, gladly obeyed and was so recomforted with the warmth of the bath that himseemed he was come back from death to life. The lady let fetch him a suit of clothes that had pertained to her husband, then lately dead, which when he had donned, they seemed made to his measure, and whilst awaiting what she should command him, he fell to thanking God and St. Julian for that they had delivered him from the scurvy night he had in prospect and had, as he deemed, brought him to good harborage.

Presently, the lady, being somewhat rested, let make a great fire in her dining-hall and betaking herself thither, asked how it was with the poor man; whereto the maid answered, "Madam, he hath clad himself and is a handsome man and appeareth a person of good condition and very well-mannered." Quoth the lady, "Go, call him and bid him come to the fire and sup, for I know he is fasting." Accordingly, Rinaldo entered the hall and seeing the gentlewoman, who appeared to him a lady of quality, saluted

her respectfully and rendered her the best thanks in his power for the kindness done him. The lady, having seen and heard him and finding him even as her maid had said, received him graciously and making him sit familiarly with her by the fire, questioned him of the chance that had brought him thither; whereupon he related everything to her in order. Now she had heard somewhat of this at the time of his servant's coming into the town, wherefore she gave entire belief to all he said and told him, in turn, what she knew of his servant and how he might lightly find him again on the morrow. Then, the table being laid, Rinaldo, at the lady's instance, washed his hands and sat down with her to supper. Now he was tall of his person and comely and pleasant of favor and very engaging and agreeable of manners and a man in the prime of life; wherefore the lady had several times cast her eyes on him and found him much to her liking, and her desires being already aroused for the Marquis, who was to have come to lie with her, she had taken a mind to him. Accordingly, after supper, whenas they were risen from table, she took counsel with her maid whether herseemed she would do well, the Marquis having left her in the lurch, to use the good which fortune had sent her. The maid, seeing her mistress's drift, encouraged her as best she might to ensue it; whereupon the lady, returning to the fireside, where she had left Rinaldo alone, fell to gazing amorously upon him and said to him, "How now, Rinaldo, why bide you thus melancholy? Think you you cannot be requited the loss of a horse and of some small matter of clothes? Take comfort and be of good cheer; you are in your own house. Nay, I will e'en tell you more, that, seeing you with those clothes on your back, which were my late husband's, and me-seeming you were himself, there hath taken me belike an hundred times to-night a longing to embrace you and kiss you; and but that I feared to displease you, I had certainly done it."

Rinaldo, who was no simpleton, hearing these words and seeing the lady's eyes sparkle, advanced towards her with open arms, saying, "Madam, considering that I owe it to you to say that I am now alive and having regard to that

from which you delivered me, it were great unmannerliness in me, did I not study to do everything that may be agreeable to you; wherefore do you embrace me and kiss me to your heart's content, and I will kiss and clip you more than willingly." There needed no more words. The lady, who was all afire with amorous longing, straightway threw herself into his arms and after she had strained him desirefully to her bosom and bussed him a thousand times and had of him been kissed as often, they went off to her chamber and there without delay betaking themselves to bed, they fully and many a time, before the day should come, satisfied their desires one of the other. Whenas the day began to appear, they arose,—it being her pleasure, so the thing might not be suspected of any,—and she, having given him some sorry clothes and a purse full of money and shown him how he should go about to enter the town and find his servant, put him forth at the postern whereby he had entered, praying him keep the matter secret.

As soon as it was broad day and the gates were opened, he entered the town, feigning to come from afar, and found his servant. Therewithal he donned the clothes that were in the saddle-bags and was about to mount the man's horse and depart, when, as by a miracle, it befell that the three highwaymen, who had robbed him overnight, having been a little after taken for some other misdeed of them committed, were brought into the town and on their confession, his horse and clothes and money were restored to him, nor did he lose aught save a pair of garters, with which the robbers knew not what they had done. Rinaldo accordingly gave thanks to God and St. Julian and taking horse, returned home, safe and sound, leaving the three rogues to go kick on the morrow against the wind.



MADAM FRANCESCA'S SUITORS

Madam Francesca, being courted of one Rinuccio Palermini and one Alessandro Chiarmontesi and loving neither the one nor the other, adroitly riddeth herself of both by causing one enter for dead into a sepulcher and the other bring him forth thereof for dead, on such wise that they cannot avail to accomplish the condition imposed.

THERE was once in the city of Pistoia a very fair widow lady, of whom two of our townsmen, called the one Rinuccio Palermini and the other Alessandro Chiarmontesi, there abiding by reason of banishment from Florence, were, without knowing one of another, passionately enamored, having by chance fallen in love with her and doing privily each his utmost endeavor to win her favor. The gentlewoman in question, whose name was Madam Francesca de Lazzari, being still importuned of the one and the other with messages and entreaties, to which she had whiles somewhat unwisely given ear, and desiring, but in vain, discreetly to retract, bethought herself how she might avail to rid herself of their importunity by requiring them of a service, which, albeit it was possible, she conceived that neither of them would render her, to the intent that, they not doing that which she required, she might have a fair and colorable occasion of refusing to hearken more to their messages; and the device which occurred to her was on this wise.

There had died that very day at Pistoia, one, who, albeit his ancestors were gentlemen, was reputed the worst man that was, not only in Pistoia, but in all the world; more by token that he was in his lifetime so misshapen and of so monstrous a favor that who so knew him not, seeing him for the first time, had been affeared of him; and he had been buried in a tomb without the church of the Minor Friars. This circumstance she bethought herself would in part be very apt to her purpose and accordingly she said to a maid of hers, "Thou knowest the annoy and the vexation I suffer all day long by the messages of yonder two

Florentines, Rinuccio and Alessandro. Now I am not disposed to gratify (either of) them with my love, and to rid myself of them, I have bethought myself, for the great proffers that they make, to seek to make proof of them in somewhat which I am certain they will not do; so shall I do away from me this their importunity, and thou shalt see how. Thou knowest that Scannadio," for so was the wicked man called of whom we have already spoken, "was this morning buried in the burial-place of the Minor Brethren, Scannadio, of whom, whenas they saw him alive, let alone dead, the doughtiest men of this city went in fear; wherefore go thou privily first to Alessandro and bespeak him, saying, 'Madam Francesca giveth thee to know that now is the time come whenas thou mayst have her love, which thou hast so much desired, and be with her, an thou wilt, on this wise. This night, for a reason which thou shalt know after, the body of Scannadio, who was this morning buried, is to be brought to her house by a kinsman of hers, and she, being in great fear of him, dead though he be, would fain not have him there; wherefore she prayeth thee that it please thee, by way of doing her a great service, go this evening, at the time of the first sleep, to the tomb wherein he is buried, and donning the dead man's clothes, abide as thou wert he until such time as they shall come for thee. Then, without moving or speaking, thou must suffer thyself be taken up out of the tomb and carried to her house, where she will receive thee, and thou mayst after abide with her and depart at thy leisure, leaving to her the care of the rest.' An he say that he will do it, well and good; but, should he refuse, bid him on my part, never more show himself whereas I may be and look, as he valueth his life, that he send me no more letters or messages. Then shalt thou betake thee to Rinuccio Palermi and say to him, 'Madam Francesca saith that she is ready to do thine every pleasure, an thou wilt render her a great service, to wit, that to-night, towards the middle hour, thou get thee to the tomb wherein Scannadio was this morning buried and take him up softly thence and bring him to her at her house, without saying a word of aught thou mayst hear or feel. There shalt thou learn what she would with

him and greatly enjoy her society; but, an it please thee not to do this, she chargeth thee never more send her writ nor message.”

The maid betook herself to the two lovers and did her errand punctually to each, saying as it had been enjoined her; whereto each made answer that, an it pleased her, they would go, not only into a tomb, but into hell itself. The maid carried their reply to the lady and she waited to see if they would be mad enough to do it. The night come, whenas it was the season of the first sleep, Alessandro Chiarmontesi, having stripped himself to his doublet, went forth of his house to take Scannadio's place in the tomb; but, by the way, there came a very frightful thought into his head and he fell a-saying in himself, “Good lack, what a fool I am? Whither go I? How know I but yonder woman's kinsfolk, having maybe perceived that I love her and believing that which is not, have caused me do this, so they may slaughter me in yonder tomb? An it should happen thus, I should suffer for it nor would aught in the world be ever known thereof to their detriment. Or what know I but maybe some enemy of mine hath procured me this, whom she belike loveth and seeketh to oblige therein?” Then said he, “But, grant that neither of these things be and that her kinsfolk are e'en for carrying me to her house, I must believe that they want not Scannadio's body to hold it in their arms or to put it in hers; nay, it is rather to be conceived that they mean to do it some mischief, as the body of one who maybe disobliged them in somewhat aforetime. She saith that I am not to say a word for aught that I may feel. But, should they put out mine eyes or draw my teeth or lop off my hands or play me any other such trick, how shall I do? How could I abide quiet? And if I speak: they will know me and mayhap do me a mischief, or, though they do me no hurt, yet shall I have accomplished nothing, for that they will not leave me with the lady; whereupon she will say that I have broken her commandment and will never do aught to pleasure me.” So saying, he had well nigh returned home; but, nevertheless, his great love urged him on with counter arguments of such potency that they brought him to the tomb, which he opened

and entering therein, stripped Scannadio of his clothes; then, donning them and shutting the tomb upon himself, he laid himself in the dead man's place. Thereupon he began to call to mind what manner of man the latter had been and remembering him of all the things whereof he had aforetime heard tell as having befallen by night, not to say in the sepulchers of the dead, but even elsewhere, his every hair began to stand on end and himseemed each moment as if Scannadio should rise upright and butcher him then and there. However, aided by his ardent love, he got the better of these and the other fearful thoughts that beset him and abiding as he were the dead man, he fell to awaiting that which should betide him.

Meanwhile, Rinuccio, midnight being now at hand, departed his house, to do that which had been enjoined him of his mistress, and as he went, he entered into many and various thoughts of the things which might possibly betide him; as, to wit, that he might fall into the hands of the police, with Scannadio's body on his shoulders, and be doomed to the fire as a sorcerer, and that he should, an the thing came to be known, incur the illwill of his kinsfolk, and other like thoughts, whereby he was like to have been deterred. But after bethinking himself again, "Alack," quoth he, "shall I deny this gentlewoman, whom I have so loved and love, the first thing she requireth of me, especially as I am thereby to gain her favor? God forbid, though I were certainly to die thereof, but I should set myself to do that which I have promised!" Accordingly, he went on and presently coming to the sepulcher, opened it easily; which Alessandro hearing, abode still, albeit he was in great fear. Rinuccio, entering in and thinking to take Scannadio's body, laid hold of Alessandro's feet and drew him forth of the tomb; then, hoisting him on his shoulders, he made off towards the lady's house.

Going thus and taking no manner of heed to his burden, he jolted it many a time now against one corner and now another of certain benches that were beside the way, more by token that the night was so cloudy and so dark he could not see whither he went. He was already well nigh at the door of the gentlewoman, who had posted herself at the

window with her maid, to see if he would bring Alessandro, and was ready armed with an excuse to send them both away, when it chanced that the officers of the watch, who were ambushed in the street and abode silently on the watch to lay hands upon a certain outlaw, hearing the scuffling that Rinuccio made with his feet, suddenly put out a light, to see what was to do and whither to go, and rattled their targets and halberds, crying, "Who goeth there?" Rinuccio, seeing this and having scant time for deliberation, let fall his burden and made off as fast as his legs would carry him; whereupon Alessandro arose in haste and made off in his turn, for all he was hampered with the dead man's clothes, which were very long. The lady, by the light of the lantern put out by the police, had plainly recognized Rinuccio, with Alessandro on his shoulders, and perceiving the latter to be clad in Scannadio's clothes, marvelled amain at the exceeding hardihood of both; but, for all her wonderment, she laughed heartily to see Alessandro cast down on the ground and to see him after take to flight. Then, rejoiced at this accident and praising God that He had rid her of the annoy of these twain, she turned back into the house and betook herself to her chamber, avouching to her maid that without doubt they both loved her greatly, since, as it appeared, they had done that which she had enjoined them.

Meanwhile Rinuccio, woeful and cursing his ill fortune for all that returned not home, but, as soon as the watch had departed the neighborhood, he came back whereas he had dropped Alessandro and groped about, to see if he could find him again, so he might make an end of his service; but, finding him not and concluding that the police had carried him off, he returned to his own house, woebegone, whilst Alessandro, unknowing what else to do, made off home on like wise, chagrined at such a misadventure and without having recognized him who had borne him thither. On the morrow, Scannadio's tomb being found opened and his body not to be seen, for that Alessandro had rolled it to the bottom of the vault, all Pistoia was busy with various conjectures anent the matter, and the simpler sort concluded that he had been carried off by the devils. Nevertheless,

each of the two lovers signified to the lady that which he had done and what had befallen and excusing himself withal for not having accomplished her commandment, claimed her favor and her love; but she, making believe to credit neither of them, rid herself of them with a curt response to the effect that she would never consent to do aught for them, since they had not done that which she had required of them.



THE LOVERS AND THE THIEVES

Pietro Boccamazza, fleeing with Agnolella, falleth among thieves; the girl escapeth through a wood and is led [by fortune] to a castle, whilst Pietro is taken by the thieves, but presently, escaping from their hands, winneth, after divers adventures, to the castle where his mistress is and espousing her, returneth with her to Rome.

THERE was, a little while ago, at Rome,—once the head, as it is nowadays the tail of the world,—a youth, called Pietro Boccamazza, of a very worshipful family among those of the city, who fell in love with a very fair and lovesome damsel called Agnolella, the daughter of one Gigliuzzo Saullo, a plebeian, but very dear to the Romans, and loving her, he contrived so to do that the girl began to love him no less than he loved her; whereupon, constrained by fervent love and himseeming he might no longer brook the cruel pain that the desire he had of her gave him, he demanded her in marriage; which no sooner did his kinsfolk know than they all repaired to him and chid him sore for that which he would have done; and on the other hand they gave Gigliuzzo to understand that he should make no account of Pietro's words, for that, an he did this, they would never have him for friend or kinsman. Pietro, seeing that way barred whereby alone he deemed he might avail to win to his desire, was like to die of chagrin, and had Gigliuzzo consented, he would have taken his daughter to wife, in despite of all his kindred. However, he determined, an it liked the girl, to contrive to give effect to their wishes, and having assured himself, by means of an intermediary, that this was agreeable to her, he agreed with her that she should flee with him from Rome.

Accordingly, having taken order for this, Pietro arose very early one morning and taking horse with the damsel, set out for Anagni, where he had certain friends in whom he trusted greatly. They had no leisure to make a wedding of it, for that they feared to be followed, but rode on, devising of their love and now and again kissing each other.

It chanced that, when they came mayhap eight miles from Rome, the way not being overwell known to Pietro, they took a path to the left, whereas they should have kept to the right; and scarce had they ridden more than two miles farther when they found themselves near a little castle, wherefrom, as soon as they were seen, there issued suddenly a dozen footmen. The girl, espying these, whenas they were already close upon them, cried out, saying, "Pietro, let us begone, for we are attacked;" then, turning her rouncey's head, as best she knew, toward a great wood hard by, she clapped her spurs fast to his flank and held on to the saddle-bows, whereupon the nag, feeling himself goaded, bore her into the wood at a gallop.

Pietro, who went gazing more at her face than at the road, not having become so quickly aware as she of the newcomers, was overtaken and seized by them, whilst he still looked, without perceiving them, to see whence they had come. They made him alight from his hackney and inquired who he was, which he having told, they proceeded to take counsel together and said, "This fellow is of the friends of our enemies; what else should we do but take from him these clothes and this nag and string him up to one of yonder oaks, to spite the Orsini?" They all fell in with this counsel and bade Pietro put off his clothes, which as he was in act to do, foreboding him by this of the evil fate which awaited him, it chanced that an ambush of good five-and-twenty footmen started suddenly out upon the others, crying, "Kill! Kill!" The rogues, taken by surprise, let Pietro be and turned to stand upon their defense, but, seeing themselves greatly outnumbered by their assailants, betook themselves to flight, whilst the others pursued them.

Pietro, seeing this, hurriedly caught up his gear and springing on his hackney, addressed himself, as best he might, to flee by the way he had seen his mistress take; but finding her not and seeing neither road nor footpath in the wood, neither perceiving any horse's hoof marks, he was the woofullest man alive; and as soon as himseemed he was safe and out of reach of those who had taken him, as well as of the others by whom they had been assailed, he began to drive hither and thither about the wood, weeping

and calling; but none answered him and he dared not turn back and knew not where he might come, an he went forward, more by token that he was in fear of the wild beasts that used to harbor in the woods, at once for himself and for his mistress, whom he looked momentarily to see strangled of some bear or some wolf. On this wise, then, did the unlucky Pietro range all day about the wood, crying and calling, whiles going backward, whenas he thought to go forward, until, what with shouting and weeping and fear and long fasting, he was so spent that he could no more and, seeing the night come and knowing not what other course to take, he dismounted from his hackney and tied the latter to a great oak, into which he climbed, so he might not be devoured of the wild beasts in the night. A little after the moon rose and the night being very clear and bright, he abode there on wake, sighing and weeping and cursing his ill luck, for that he durst not go to sleep, lest he should fall; albeit, had he had more commodity thereof, grief and the concern in which he was for his mistress would not have suffered him to sleep.

Meanwhile, the damsel, fleeing, as we have before said, and knowing not whither to betake herself, save whereas it seemed good to her hackney to carry her, fared on so far into the wood that she could not see where she had entered, and went wandering all day about that desert place, no otherwise than as Pietro had done, now pausing [to harken] and now going on weeping the while and calling and making moan of her illhap. At last, seeing that Pietro came not and it being now eventide, she happened on a little path, into which her hackney turned, and following it, after she had ridden some two or more miles, she saw a little house afar off. Thither she made her way as quickliest she might and found there a good man sore stricken in years and a woman, his wife, alike old, who, seeing her alone, said to her, "Daughter, what dost thou alone at this hour in these parts?" The damsel replied, weeping, that she had lost her company in the wood and inquired how near she was to Anagni. "Daughter mine," answered the good man, "this is not the way to go to Anagni; it is more than a dozen miles hence."

Quoth the girl, "And how far is it hence to any habitations where I may have lodging for the night?" To which the good man answered, "There is none anywhere so near that thou mayst come thither by daylight." Then said the damsel, "Since I can go no otherwhere, will it please you harbor me here to-night for the love of God!" "Young lady," replied the old man, "thou art very welcome to abide with us this night; altho, we must warn you that there are many ill companies, both of friends and of foes, that come and go about these parts both by day and by night, who many a time do us sore annoy and great mischief; and if, by ill chance, thou being here, there come any of them and seeing thee, fair and young as thou art, should offer to do thee affront and shame, we could not avail to succor thee therefrom. We deem it well to apprise thee of this, so that, an it betide, thou mayst not be able to complain of us."

The girl, seeing that it was late, albeit the old man's words affrighted her, said, "An it please God, He will keep both you and me from that annoy, and even if it befall me, it were a much less evil to be maltreated of men than to be mangled of the wild beasts in the woods." So saying, she alighted from the rouncey and entered the poor man's house, where she supped with him on such poor fare as they had and after, all clad as she was, cast herself, together with them, on a little bed of theirs. She gave not over sighing and bewailing her own mishap and that of Pietro all night, knowing not if she might hope other than ill of him; and when it drew near unto morning she heard a great trampling of folk approaching, whereupon she rose and betaking herself to a great courtyard, that lay behind the little house, saw in a corner a great heap of hay, in which she hid herself, so she might not be so quickly found, if those folk should come hither. Hardly had she made an end of hiding herself when these, who were a great company of ill knaves, came to the door of the little house and causing them open to them, entered and found Agnolella's hackney yet all saddled and bridled; whereupon they asked who was there and the good man, not seeing the girl, answered, "None is here save ourselves but this rouncey, from whomsoever it may have escaped, came hither yestereve

and we brought it into the house, lest the wolves should eat it." "Then," said the captain of the troop, "since it hath none other master, it is fair prize for us."

Thereupon they all dispersed about the little house and some went into the courtyard, where, laying down their lances and targets, it chanced that one of them, knowing not what else to do, cast his lance into the hay and came very near to slay the hidden girl and she to discover herself, for that the lance passed so close to her left breast that the steel tore a part of her dress, wherefore she was like to utter a great cry, fearing to be wounded, but, remembering where she was, she abode still, all fear-stricken. Presently, the rogues, having dressed the kids and other meat they had with them and eaten and drunken, went off some hither and some thither, about their affairs, and carried with them the girl's hackney. When they had gone some distance, the good man asked his wife, "What befell of our young woman, who came hither yestereve? I have seen nothing of her since we arose." The good wife replied that she knew not and went looking for her, whereupon the girl, hearing that the rogues were gone, came forth of the hay, to the no small contentment of her host, who, rejoiced to see that she had not fallen into their hands, said to her, it now growing day, "Now that the day cometh, we will, an it please thee, accompany thee to a castle five miles hence, where thou wilt be in safety; but needs must thou go afoot, for yonder ill folk, that but now departed hence, have carried off thy rouncey." The girl concerned herself little about the nag, but besought them for God's sake to bring her to the castle in question, whereupon they set out and came thither about half tierce.

Now this castle belonged to one of the Orsini family, by name Lionello di Campodiflore, and there by chance was his wife, a very pious and good lady, who, seeing the girl, knew her forthright and received her with joy and would fain know orderly how she came thither. Agnolella told her all and the lady, who knew Pietro on like wise, as being a friend of her husband's, was grieved for the ill chance that had betided and hearing where he had been taken, doubted not but he was dead; wherefore she said to Agnolella,

"Since thou knowest not what is come of Pietro, thou shalt abide here till such time as I shall have a commodity to send thee safe to Rome."

Meanwhile Pietro abode, as woebegone as could be, in the oak, and toward the season of the first sleep, he saw a good score of wolves appear, which came all about his hackney, as soon as they saw him. The horse, scenting them, tugged at his bridle, till he broke it, and would have fled, but, being surrounded and unable to escape, he defended himself a great while with his teeth and hoofs. At last, however, he was brought down and strangled and quickly disemboweled by the wolves, which took all their fill of his flesh and having devoured him, made off, without leaving aught but the bones; whereat Pietro, to whom it seemed he had in the rouncey a companion and a support in his troubles, was sore dismayed and misdoubted he should never avail to win forth of the wood. However, toward daybreak, being perished with cold in the oak and looking still all about him, he caught sight of a great fire before him, mayhap a mile off; wherefore, as soon as it was grown broad day, he came down from the oak, not without fear, and making for the fire, fared on till he came to the place, where he found shepherds eating and making merry about it, by whom he was received for compassion.

After he had eaten and warmed himself, he acquainted them with his misadventure and telling them how he came thither alone, asked them if there was in those parts a village or castle, to which he might betake himself. The shepherds answered that some three miles thence there was a castle belonging to Lionello di Campodifiore, whose lady was presently there; whereat Pietro was much rejoiced and besought them that one of them should accompany him to the castle, which two of them readily did. There he found some who knew him and was in the act to inquire for a means of having search made about the forest for the damsel, when he was bidden to the lady's presence and incontinent repaired to her. Never was joy like unto this when he saw Agnolella with her, and he was all consumed with desire to embrace her, but forbore of respect for the lady; and if he was glad, the girl's joy was no less great. The gentle lady, having

welcomed him and made much of him and heard from him what had betided them, chid him amain of that which he would have done against the will of his kinsfolk; but, seeing that he was e'en resolved upon this and that it was agreeable to the girl also, she said in herself, "Why do I weary myself in vain? These two love and know each other and both are friends of my husband's. Their desire is an honorable one and meseemeth it is pleasing to God, since the one of them hath escaped the gibbet and the other the lance-thrust and both the wild beasts of the wood; wherefore be it as they will." Then, turning to the lovers, she said to them, "If you have it still at heart to be man and wife, it is my pleasure also; be it so, and let the nuptials be celebrated here at Lionello's expense. I will engage after to make peace between you and your families." Accordingly, they were married then and there, to the great contentment of Pietro and the yet greater satisfaction of Agnolella, and the gentle lady made them honorable nuptials, in so far as might be in the mountains. There, after their marriage, they passed the beginning of their honeymoon and a few days after, they took horse with the lady and returned, under good escort, to Rome, where she found Pietro's kinsfolk sore incensed at that which he had done, but contrived to make his peace with them, and he lived with his Agnolella in all peace and pleasance to a good old age.



GHISMONDA AND GUISCARDO

Tancred, Prince of Salerno, slayeth his daughter's lover and sendeth her his heart in a bowl of gold; whereupon, pouring poisoned water over it, she drinketh thereof and dieth.

TANCREDE, Lord of Salerno, was a humane prince and benign enough of nature (had he not in his old age imbrued his hands in lovers' blood), who in all the course of his life had but one daughter, and happier had he been if he had none.⁴ She was of him as tenderly loved as ever daughter of father, and knowing not, by reason of this his tender love for her, how to part with her, he married her not till she had long overpassed the age when she should have had a husband. At last, he gave her to wife to a son of the Duke of Capua, with whom having abidden a little while, she was left a widow and returned to her father. Now she was most fair of form and favor, as ever was woman, and young and sprightly and learned perchance more than is required of a lady. Abiding, then, with her father in all ease and luxury, like a great lady as she was, and seeing that, for the love he bore her, he recked little of marrying her again, nor did it seem to her a seemly thing to require him thereof, she bethought herself to seek, an it might be, to get her privily a worthy lover. She saw men galore, gentle and simple, frequent her father's court, and considering the manners and fashions of many, a young serving man of her father's, Guiscardo by name, a man of humble enough extraction, but nobler of worth and manners than whatsoever other, pleased her over all and of him, seeing him often, she became in secret ardently enamored, approving more and more his fashions every hour; whilst the young man, who was no dullard, perceiving her liking for him, received her into his heart, on such wise that his mind was thereby diverted from well nigh everything other than the love of her.

Each, then, thus secretly tendering the other, the young lady, who desired nothing so much as to foregather with him, but had no mind to make any one a confidant of her

passion, bethought herself of a rare device to apprise him of the means; to wit, she wrote him a letter, wherein she showed him how he should do to foregather with her on the ensuing day, and placing it in the hollow of a cane, gave the latter jestingly to Guiscardo, saying, "Make thee a bellows thereof for thy serving-maid, wherewith she may blow up the fire to-night." Guiscardo took the cane and bethinking himself that she would not have given it him nor spoken thus, without some cause, took his leave and returned therewith to his lodging. There he examined the cane and seeing it to be cleft, opened it and found therein the letter, which having read and well apprehended that which he had to do, he was the joyfulest man alive and set about taking order how he might go to her, according to the fashion appointed him of her.

There was, beside the prince's palace, a grotto hewn out of the rock and made in days long ago, and to this grotto some little light was given by a tunnel by art wrought in the mountain, which latter, for that the grotto was abandoned, was well nigh blocked at its mouth with briars and weeds that had over-grown it. Into this grotto one might go by a privy stair which was in one of the ground floor rooms of the lady's apartment in the palace and which was shut in by a very strong door. This stair was so out of all folk's minds, for that it had been unused from time immemorial, that well nigh none remembered it to be there; but Love, to whose eyes there is nothing so secret but it winneth, had recalled it to the memory of the enamored lady, who, that none should get wind of the matter, had labored sore many days with such tools as she might command, ere she could make shift to open the door; then, going down alone thereby into the grotto and seeing the tunnel, she sent to bid Guiscardo study to come to her thereby and acquainted him with the height which herseemed should be from the mouth thereof to the ground.

To this end Guiscardo promptly made ready a rope with certain knots and loops, whereby he might avail to descend and ascend, and donning a leathern suit, that should defend him from the briars, he on the ensuing night repaired, without letting any know aught of the matter, to the mouth of

the tunnel. There making one end of the rope fast to a stout tree-stump that had grown up in the mouth, he let himself down thereby into the grotto and here awaited the lady, who, on the morrow, feigning a desire to sleep, dismissed her women and shut herself up alone in her chamber; then, opening the privy door, she descended into the grotto, where she found Guiscardo. They greeted one another with marvelous joy and betook themselves to her chamber, where they abode great part of the day in the utmost delight; and after they had taken order together for the discreet conduct of their loves, so they might abide secret, Guiscardo returned to the grotto, whilst she shut the privy door and went forth to her women. The night come, Guiscardo climbed up by his rope to the mouth of the tunnel and issuing forth whence he had entered in, returned to his lodging; and having learned this road, he in process of time returned thither many times after.

But Fortune, jealous of so long and so great a delight, with a woeful chance changed the gladness of the two lovers into mourning and sorrow; and it befell on this wise. Tancred was wont to come bytimes all alone into his daughter's chamber and there abide with her and converse awhile and after go away. Accordingly, one day, after dinner, he came thither, what time the lady (whose name was Ghismonda) was in a garden of hers with all her women, and willing not to take her from her diversion, he entered her chamber, without being seen or heard of any. Finding the windows closed and the curtains let down over the bed, he sat down in a corner on a hassock at the bedfoot and leaned his head against the bed; then, drawing the curtain over himself, as if he had studied to hide himself there, he fell asleep. As he slept thus, Ghismonda, who, as ill chance would have it, had appointed her lover to come thither that day, softly entered the chamber, leaving her women in the garden, and having shut herself in, without perceiving that there was some one there, opened the secret door to Guiscardo, who awaited her. They straightway betook themselves to bed, as of their wont, and it befell that in due time Tancred, being awakened by some noise and discovering them in the same room together, knew what his daughter planned; whereat

beyond measure grieved, at first he would have cried out at them, but after bethought himself to keep silence and abide, as he might, hidden, so with more secrecy and less shame to himself he might avail to do that which had already occurred to his mind.

The two lovers abode a great while together, according to their usance, without observing Tancred, and coming down from the bed, whenas it seemed to them time, Guiscardo returned to the grotto and she departed the chamber; whereupon Tancred, for all he was an old man, let himself down into the garden by a window and returned, unseen of any, to his own chamber, sorrowful unto death. That same night, at the time of the first sleep, Guiscardo, by his orders, was seized by two men, as he came forth of the tunnel, and carried secretly, trussed as he was in his suit of leather, to Tancred, who, whenas he saw him, said, well nigh weeping, "Guiscardo, my kindness to thee merited not the outrage and the shame thou hast done me in mine own flesh and blood, as I have this day seen with my very eyes." Whereto Guiscardo answered nothing but this, "Love can far more than either you or I." Tancred then commanded that he should be kept secretly under guard and in one of the chambers of the palace, and so was it done.

On the morrow, having meanwhile revolved in himself many and divers devices, he betook himself, after eating, as of his wont, to his daughter's chamber and sending for the lady, who as yet knew nothing of these things, shut himself up with her and proceeded, with tears in his eyes, to bespeak her thus: "Ghismonda, meseemed I knew thy virtue and thine honesty, nor might it ever have occurred to my mind, though it were told me, had I not seen it with mine own eyes, that thou wouldst, even so much as in thought, have abandoned thyself to any man, except he were thy husband; wherefore in this scant remnant of life that my eld reserveth unto me, I shall still abide sorrowful, remembering me of this. Would God, an thou must needs stoop to such wantonness, thou hadst taken a man sortable to thy quality! But, amongst so many who frequent my court, thou hast chosen Guiscardo, a youth of the meanest condition, reared in our court, well nigh of charity, from a little child up to

this day: wherefore thou has put me in sore travail of mind, for that I know not what course to take with thee. With Guiscardo, whom I caused take yesternight, as he issued forth of the tunnel, and have in ward, I am already resolved how to deal; but with thee God knoweth I know not what to do. On one side love draweth me, which I have still borne thee more than father ever bore daughter, and on the other most just despite, conceived for thine exceeding folly; the one would have me pardon thee, the other would have me, against my nature, deal harshly by thee. But, ere I come to a decision, I would fain hear what thou hast to say to this." So saying, he bowed his head and wept sore as would a beaten child.

Ghismonda, hearing her father's words and seeing that not only was her secret love discovered, but Guiscardo taken, felt an inexpressible chagrin and came many a time near upon showing it with outcry and tears, as women mostly do; nevertheless, her haughty soul overmastering that weakness, with marvelous fortitude she composed her countenance and rather than proffer any prayer for herself, determined inwardly to abide no more on life, doubting not but her Guiscardo was already dead. Wherefore, not as a woman rebuked and woeful for her default, but as one undaunted and valiant, with dry eyes and face open and nowise troubled, she thus bespoke her father: "Tancred, I purpose neither to deny nor to entreat, for that the one would profit me nothing nor would I have the other avail me; more by token that I am nowise minded to seek to render thy mansuetude and thine affection favorable to me, but rather, confessing the truth, first with true arguments to vindicate mine honor and after with deeds right resolutely to ensue the greatness of my soul. True it is I have loved and love Guiscardo, and what while I live, which will be little, I shall love him, nor, if folk live after death, shall I ever leave loving him; but unto this it was not so much my feminine frailty that moved me as thy little solicitude to remarry me and his own worth.

"It should have been manifest to thee, Tancred, being as thou art of flesh and blood, that thou hadst begotten a daughter of flesh and blood and not of iron or stone; and

thou shouldst have remembered and should still remember, for all thou art old, what and what like are the laws of youth and with what potency they work: nor, albeit thou, being a man, hast in thy best years exercised thyself in part in arms, shouldst thou the less know what ease and leisure and luxury can do in the old, to say nothing of the young. I am, then, as being of thee begotten, of flesh and blood and have lived so little that I am yet young and (for the one and the other reason) full of life, whereunto the having aforetime, by reason of marriage, known what joy it is to have the love and companionship of a husband hath added marvelous strength. Unable, therefore, to withstand the strength of my desires, I addressed myself, being young and a woman, to ensue that whereto they prompted me and became enamored. And certes in this I set my every faculty to the endeavoring that, so far as in me lay, no shame should ensue either to thee or to me through this to which natural frailty moved me. To this compassionate Love and favoring Fortune found and showed me a very occult way, whereby, unknown of any, I won to my desire, and this, whoever it be discovered it to thee or howsoever thou knowest it, I nowise deny.

“Guiscardo I took not at hazard, as many women do; nay, of deliberate counsel I chose him before every other and with advisement prepense drew him to me and by dint of perseverance and discretion on my part and on his, I caused him forthwith to come to love me. Whereof it seemeth that thou, ensuing rather vulgar prejudice than truth, reproachest me with more bitterness than of having sinned by way of love, saying (as if thou shouldst not have been chagrined, had I chosen therefor a man of gentle birth), that I have committed myself with a man of mean condition. Wherein thou seest not that thou blamest not my default, but that of fortune, which too often advanceth the unworthy to high estate, leaving the worthiest alow.

“But now let us leave this and look somewhat to the first principles of things, whereby thou wilt see that we all get our flesh from one same stock and that all souls were by one same Creator created with equal faculties, equal powers and

equal virtues. Worth it was that first distinguished between us, who were all and still are born equal; wherefore those who had and used the greatest sum thereof were called noble and the rest abode not noble. And albeit contrary usance hath since obscured this primary law, yet is it nowise done away nor blotted out from nature and good manners; wherefore he who doth worthily manifestly sheweth himself a gentleman, and if any call him otherwise, not he who is called, but he who calleth committeth default. Look among all thy gentlemen and examine into their worth, their usances and their manners, and on the other hand consider those of Guiscardo; if thou wilt consent to judge without animosity, thou wilt say that he is most noble and that these thy nobles are all churls. With regard to his worth and virtue, I trusted not to the judgment of any other, but to that of thy words and of mine own eyes. Who ever so commended him as thou didst in all those praiseworthy things wherefor a man of worth should be commended? And certes not without reason; for, if mine eyes deceive me not, there was no praise given him of thee which I saw him not justify by deeds, and that more admirably than thy words availed to express; and even had I suffered any deceit in this, it is by thyself I should have been deceived. An, then, thou sayst that I have committed myself with a man of mean condition, thou sayst not sooth; but shouldst thou say with a poor man, it might peradventure be conceded thee, to thy shame who hast so ill known to put a servant of thine and a man of worth in good case; yet poverty bereaveth not any of gentillesse; nay, rather, wealth it is that doth this. Many kings, many great princes were once poor and many who delve and tend sheep were once very rich.

“The last doubt that thou broachest, to wit, what thou shouldst do with me, drive it away altogether; and thou in thine extreme old age be disposed to do that which thou usedst not, being young, namely, to deal cruelly, wreak thy cruelty upon me, who am minded to proffer no prayer unto thee, as being the prime cause of this sin, if sin it be; for of this I certify thee, that whatsoever thou hast done or shalt do with Guiscardo, an thou do not the like with me, mine

own hands shall do it. Now begone; go shed tears with women and waxing cruel, slay him and me with one same blow, an it seem to thee we have deserved it."

The prince knew the greatness of his daughter's soul, but notwithstanding believed her not altogether so firmly resolved as she said unto that which her words gave out. Wherefore, taking leave of her and having laid aside all intent of using rigor against her person, he thought to cool her fervent love with others' suffering and accordingly bade Guiscardo's two guardians strangle him without noise that same night and taking out his heart, bring it to him. They did even as it was commanded them, and on the morrow the prince let bring a great and goodly bowl of gold and setting therein Guiscardo's heart, dispatched it to his daughter by the hands of a very privy servant of his, bidding him say, whenas he gave it her, "Thy father sendeth thee this, to solace thee of the thing thou most lovest, even as thou hast solaced him of that which he loved most."

Now Ghismonda, unmoved from her stern purpose, had, after her father's departure, let bring poisonous herbs and roots and distilled and reduced them in water, so she might have it at hand, an that she feared should come to pass. The servingman coming to her with the prince's present and message, she took the cup with a steadfast countenance and uncovered it. Whenas she saw the heart and apprehended the words of the message, she was thoroughly certified that this was Guiscardo's heart and turning her eyes upon the messenger said to him, "No sepulcher less of worth than one of gold had beseemed a heart such as this; and in this my father hath done discreetly." So saying, she set the heart to her lips and kissing it, said, "Still in everything and even to this extreme limit of my life have I found my father's love most tender toward me; but now more than ever; wherefore do thou render him on my part for so great a gift the last thanks I shall ever have to give him."

Then, bending down over the cup, which she held fast, she said, looking upon the heart, "Alack, sweetest harborage of all my pleasures, accursed be his cruelty who maketh me now to see thee with the eyes of the body! Enough was it for me at all hours to behold thee with those of the mind.

Thou hast finished thy course and hast acquitted thyself on such wise as was vouchsafed thee of fortune; thou art come to the end whereunto each runneth; thou hast left the toils and miseries of the world, and of thy very enemy thou hast that sepulcher which thy worth has merited. There lacked nought to thee to make thy funeral rites complete save her tears whom in life thou so lovedst, the which that thou mightest have, God put it into the heart of my unnatural father to send thee to me, and I will give them to thee, albeit I had purposed to die with dry eyes and visage undismayed of aught; and having given to them to thee, I will without delay so do that my soul, thou working it, shall rejoin that soul which thou erst so dearly guardedst. And in what company could I betake me more contentedly or with better assurance to the regions unknown than with it? Certain am I that it abideth yet herewithin and vieweth the seats of its delights and mine and as that which I am assured still loveth me, awaiteth my soul, whereof it is over all beloved."

So saying, no otherwise than as she had a fountain of water in her head, bowing herself over the bowl, without making any womanly outcry, she began, lamenting, to shed so many and such tears that they were a marvel to behold, kissing the dead heart the while an infinite number of times. Her women, who stood about her, understood not what this heart was nor what her words meant, but, overcome with compassion, wept all and in vain questioned her affectionately of the cause of her lament and studied yet more, as best they knew and might, to comfort her. The lady, having wept as much as her seemed fit, raised her head and drying her eyes, said, "O much-loved heart, I have accomplished mine every office toward thee, nor is there left me aught else to do save to come with my soul and bear thine company." So saying, she called for the vial wherein was the water she had made the day before and poured the latter into the bowl where was the heart bathed with so many of her tears; then, setting her mouth thereto without any fear, she drank it all off and having drunken, mounted, with the cup in her hand, upon the bed, where composing her body as most decently she might, she pressed

her dead lover's heart to her own and without saying aught, awaited death.

Her women, seeing and hearing all this, albeit they knew not what water this was she had drunken, had sent to tell Tancred everything, and he, fearing that which came to pass, came quickly down into his daughter's chamber, where he arrived what time she laid herself on her bed and addressed himself too late to comfort her with soft words; but, seeing the extremity wherein she was, he fell a-weeping grievously; whereupon quoth the lady to him, "Tancred, keep those tears against a less desired fate than this of mine and give them not to me, who desire them not. Who ever saw any, other than thou, lament for that which he himself hath willed? Nevertheless, if aught yet live in thee of the love which once thou borest me, vouchsafe me for a last boon that, since it was not thy pleasure that I should privily and in secret live with Guiscardo, my body may openly abide with his, whereassoever thou hast caused cast him dead." The agony of his grief suffered not the prince to reply; whereupon the young lady, feeling herself come to her end, strained the dead heart to her breast and said, "Abide ye with God, for I go hence." Then, closing her eyes and losing every sense, she departed this life of woe. Such, then, as you have heard, was the sorrowful ending of the loves of Guiscardo and Ghismonda, whose bodies Tancred, after much lamentation, too late repenting him of his cruelty, caused honorably bury in one same sepulcher, amid the general mourning of all the people of Salerno.



FRA CIPOLLA AND THE COALS OF ST. LAWRENCE

Fra Cipolla promiseth certain country folk to show them one of the Angel Gabriel's feathers and finding coals in place thereof, avoucheth these latter to be of those which roasted St. Lawrence.

CERTALDO, as you may belike have heard, is a burgh of Val d'Elsa situate in our county, which, small though it be, was once inhabited by gentlemen and men of substance; and thither, for that he found good pasture there, one of the friars of the order of St. Anthony was long used to resort once a year, to get in the alms bestowed by simpletons upon him and his brethren. His name was Fra Cipolla and he was gladly seen there, no less, belike, for his name's sake than for other reasons, seeing that these parts produce onions that are famous throughout all Tuscany. This Fra Cipolla was little of person, red-haired and merry of countenance, the jolliest rascal in the world, and to boot, for all he was no scholar, he was so fine a talker and so ready of wit that those who knew him not would not only have esteemed him a great rhetorician, but had avouched him to be Tully himself or may be Quintilian; and he was gossip or friend or well-wisher to well nigh every one in the country.

One August among others he betook himself thither according to his wont, and on a Sunday morning, all the goodmen and goodwives of the villages around being come to hear mass at the parish church, he came forward, whenas it seemed to him time, and said, "Gentlemen and ladies, it is, as you know, your usance to send every year to the poor of our lord Baron St. Anthony of your corn and of your oats, this little and that much, according to his means and his devoutness, to the intent that the blessed St. Anthony may keep watch over your beeves and asses and swine and sheep; and beside this, you use to pay, especially such of you as are inscribed into our company, that small due which is payable once a year. To collect these I have been sent by my superior, to wit, my lord abbot; wherefore,

with the blessing of God, you shall, after none, whenas you hear the bells ring, come hither without the church, where I will make preachment to you after the wonted fashion and you shall kiss the cross, moreover, for that I know you all to be great devotees of our lord St. Anthony, I will, as an especial favor, show you a very holy and goodly relic, which I myself brought aforetime from the holy lands beyond seas; and that is one of the Angel Gabriel's feathers, which remained in the Virgin Mary's chamber, whenas he came to announce to her in Nazareth." This said, he broke off and went on with his mass.

Now, when he said this, there were in the church, among many other, two roguish young fellows, hight one Giovanni del Bragoniera and the other Biagio Pizzini, who, after laughing with one another awhile over Fra Cipolla's relic, took counsel together, for all they were great friends and cronies of his, to play him some trick in the matter of the feather in question. Accordingly, having learned that he was to dine that morning with a friend of his in the burgh, they went down into the street, as soon as they knew him to be at table, and betook themselves to the inn where he had alighted, purposing that Biagio should hold his servant in parley, whilst Giovanni should search his baggage for the feather aforesaid, whatever it might be, and carry it off, to see what he should say to the people of the matter.

Fra Cipolla had a servant, whom some called Guccio Balena, others Guccio Imbratta and yet others Guccio Porco and who was such a scurvy knave that Lippo Topo never wrought his like, inasmuch as his master used oftentimes to jest of him with cronies and say, "My servant hath in him nine defaults, such that, were one of them in Solomon or Aristotle or Seneca, it would suffice to mar all their worth, all their wit, and all their sanctity. Consider, then, what a man he must be, who hath all nine of them and in whom there is neither worth nor wit nor sanctity." Being questioned whiles what were these nine defaults and having put them into doggrel rhyme, he would answer, "I will tell you. He's a liar, a sloven, a slugabed; disobedient, neglectful, ill bred; o'erweening, foul-spoken, a dunder-head; beside which he hath divers other peccadilloes, where-

of it booteth not to speak. But what is most laughable of all his fashions is that, wherever he goeth, he is still for taking a wife and hiring a house; for, having a big black greasy beard, himseemeth he is so exceeding handsome and agreeable that he conceiteth himself all the women who see him fall in love with him, and if you let him alone, he would run after them all till he lost his girdle. Sooth to say, he is of great assistance to me, for that none can ever seek to speak with me so secretly but he must needs hear his share; and if it chance that I be questioned of aught, he is so fearful, lest I should not know how to answer, that he straightway answereth for me both Ay and No, as he judgeth sortable."

Now Fra Cipolla, in leaving him at the inn, had bidden him look well that none touched his gear, and more particularly his saddle-bags, for that therein were the sacred things. But Guccio, who was fonder of the kitchen than the nightingale of the green boughs, especially if he scented some serving-wench there, and who had seen in that of the inn a gross fat cookmaid, undersized and ill-made, with a pair of paps that showed like two manure-baskets and a face like a cadger's, all sweaty, greasy and smoky, leaving Fra Cipolla's chamber and all his gear to care for themselves, swooped down upon the kitchen, even as the vulture swoopeth upon carrion, and seating himself by the fire, for all it was August, entered into discourse with the wench in question, whose name was Nuta, telling her that he was by rights a gentleman and had more than nine millions of florins, beside that which he had to give others, which was rather more than less, and that he could do and say God only knew what. Moreover, without regard to his bonnet, whereon was grease enough to have seasoned the caldron of Altopascio, and his doublet all torn and pieced and enamelled with filth about the collar and under the armpits, with more spots and patches of divers colors than ever had Turkey or India stuffs, and his shoes all broken and hose unsewn, he told her, as he had been the *Sieur de Chatillon*, that he meant to clothe her and trick her out anew and deliver her from the wretchedness of abiding with others, and bring her to hope of better fortune, if without any

great wealth in possession, and many other things, which, for all he delivered them very earnestly, all turned to wind and came to nought, as did most of his enterprises.

The two young men, accordingly, found Guccio busy about Nuta, whereat they were well pleased, for that it spared them half their pains, and entering Fra Cipolla's chamber, which they found open, the first thing that came under their examination was the saddle-bags wherein was the feather. In these they found, enveloped in a great taffetas wrapper, a little casket and opening this letter, discovered therein a parrot's tail-feather, which they concluded must be that which the friar had promised to show the people of Certaldo. And certes he might lightly cause it be believed in those days, for that the refinements of Egypt had not yet made their way save into a small part of Tuscany, as they have since done in very great abundance, to the undoing of all Italy; and wherever they may have been some little known, in those parts they were well nigh altogether unknown of the inhabitants; nay, the rude honesty of the ancients yet enduring there, not only had they never set eyes on a parrot, but were far from having ever heard tell of such a bird. The young men, then, rejoiced at finding the feather, laid hands on it and not to leave the casket empty, filled it with some coals they saw in a corner of the room and shut it again. Then, putting all things in order as they had found them, they made off in high glee with the feather, without having been seen, and began to await what Fra Cipolla should say, when he found the coals in place thereof.

The simple men and women who were in the church, hearing that they were to see the Angel Gabriel's feather after none, returned home, as soon as mass was over, and neighbor telling it to neighbor, and gossip to gossip, no sooner had they all dined than so many men and women flocked to the burgh that it would scarce hold them, all looking eagerly to see the aforesaid feather. Fra Cipolla, having well dined and after slept awhile, arose a little after none and hearing of the great multitude of country folk come to see the feather, sent to bid Guccio Imbratta come thither with the bells and bring his saddle-bags. Guccio,

tearing himself with difficulty away from the kitchen and Nuta, betook himself with the things required to the appointed place, whither coming, out of breath, for that the water he had drunken had made his belly swell amain, he repaired, by his master's commandment, to the church door and fell to ringing the bells lustily.

When all the people were assembled there, Fra Cipolla, without observing that aught of his had been meddled with, began his preachment and said many words anent his affairs; after which, thinking to come to the showing of the Angel Gabriel's feather, he first recited the Confiteor with the utmost solemnity and let kindle a pair of flambeaux; then, pulling off his bonnet, he delicately unfolded the tafetas wrapper and brought out the casket. Having first pronounced certain ejaculations in praise and commendation of the Angel Gabriel and of his relic, he opened the casket and seeing it full of coals, suspected not Guccio Balena of having played him this trick, for that he knew him not to be man enough; nor did he curse him for having ill kept watch lest others should do it, but silently cursed himself for having committed to him the care of his gear, knowing him, as he did, to be negligent, disobedient, careless and forgetful.

Nevertheless, without changing color, he raised his eyes and hands to heaven and said, so as to be heard of all, "O God, praised be still Thy puissance!" Then, shutting the casket and turning to the people, "Gentlemen and ladies," quoth he, "you must know that, whilst I was yet very young, I was dispatched by my superior to those parts where the sun riseth and it was expressly commanded me that I should seek till I found the Privileges of Porcellana, which, though they cost nothing to seal, are much more useful to others than to us. On this errand I set out from Venice and passed through Borgo de' Greci, whence, riding through the kingdom of Algarve and Baldacca, I came to Parione, and from there, not without thirst, I came after awhile into Sardinia. But what booteth it to set out to you in detail all the lands explored by me? Passing the straits of San Giorgio, I came into Truffia and Buffia, countries much inhabited and with great populations, and thence

into the land of Menzogna, where I found great plenty of our brethren and of friars of other religious orders, who all went about those parts, shunning unease for the love of God, recking little of others' travail, whenas they saw their own advantage to ensue, and spending none other money than such as was uncoined. Thence I passed into the land of the Abruzzi, where the men and women go in clogs over the mountains, clothing the swine in their own guts; and the little farther I found folk who carried bread on sticks and wine in bags. From this I came to the Mountains of the Bachi, where all the waters run down hill; and in brief, I made my way so far inward that I won at last even to India Pastinaca, where I swear to you, by the habit I wear on my back, that I saw hedge-bills fly, a thing incredible to whoso hath not seen it. But of this Maso del Saggio will confirm me, whom I found there a great merchant, cracking walnuts and selling the shells by retail.

"Being unable to find that which I went seeking, for that thence one goeth thither by water, I turned back and arrived in those holy countries, where, in summer-years, cold bread is worth four farthings a loaf and the hot goeth for nothing. There I found the venerable father my lord Blamemenot Anitpleaseyou, the very worshipful Patriarch of Jerusalem, who, for reverence of the habit I have still worn of my lord Baron St. Anthony, would have me see all the holy relics that he had about him and which were so many that, an I sought to recount them all to you, I should not come to an end thereof in several miles. However, not to leave you disconsolate, I will tell you some thereof. First, he showed me the finger of the Holy Ghost, as whole and sound as ever it was, and the forelock of the seraph that appeared to St. Francis and one of the nails of the Cherubim and one of the ribs of the Verbum Caro Get-thee-to-the-windows and some of the vestments of the Holy Catholic Faith and divers rays of the star that appeared to the Three Wise Men in the East and a vial of the sweat of St. Michael, whenas he fought with the devil, and the jawbone of the death of St. Lazarus and others. And for that I made him a free gift of the Steeps of Monte Morello in the vernacular and of some chapters of the Caprezio, which he had long gone seeking, he

made me a sharer in his holy relics and gave me one of the teeth of the Holy Rood and somewhat of the sound of the bells of Solomon's Temple in a vial and feather of the Angel Gabriel, whereof I have already bespoken you, and one of the pattens of St. Gherardo da Villa Magna, which not long since at Florence I gave to Gherardo di Bonsi, who hath a particular devotion for that saint; and he gave me also of the coals wherewith the most blessed martyr St. Lawrence was roasted; all which things I devoutly brought home with me and yet have. True it is that my superior hath never suffered me to show them till such time as he should be certified if they were the very things or not. But now that, by certain miracles performed by them and by letters received from the patriarch, he hath been made certain of this, he hath granted me leave to show them; and I, fearing to trust them to others, still carry them with me.

"Now I carry the Angel Gabriel's feather, so it may not be marred, in one casket, and the coals wherewith St. Lawrence was roasted in another, the which are so like one other, that it hath often happened to me to take one for the other, and so hath it betided me at this present, for that, thinking to bring hither the casket wherein was the feather, I have brought that wherein are the coals. The which I hold not to have been an error; nay, meseemeth certain that it was God's will and that He Himself placed the casket with the coals in my hands, especially now I mind me that the feast of St. Lawrence is but two days hence; wherefor God, willing that, by showing you the coals wherewith he was roasted, I should rekindle in your hearts the devotion it behooveth you have for him, caused me take, not the feather, as I purposed, but the blessed coals extinguished by the sweat of that most holy body. So, O my blessed children, put off your bonnets and draw near devoutly to behold them; but first I would have you know that whoso is scored with these coals, in the form of the sign of the cross, may rest assured, for the whole year to come, that fire shall not touch him but he shall feel it."

Having thus spoken, he opened the casket, chanting the while a canticle in praise of St. Lawrence, and showed the

coals, which after the simple multitude had awhile beheld with reverent admiration, they all crowded about Fra Cipolla and making him better offerings than they were used, besought him to touch them withal. Accordingly, taking the coals in hand, he fell to making the biggest crosses for which he could find room upon their white smocks and doublets and upon the veils of the women, avouching that how much soever the coals diminished in making these crosses, they after grew again in the caskets, as he had many a time proved. On this wise he crossed all the people of Certaldo, to his no small profit, and thus, by his ready wit and presence of mind, he baffled those who, by taking the feather from him, had thought to baffle him and who, being present at his preachment and hearing the rare shift employed by him and from how far he had taken it and with what words, had so laughed that they thought to have cracked their jaws. Then, after the common folk had departed, they went up to him and with all the mirth in the world discovered to him that which they had done and after restored him his feather, which next year stood him in as good stead as the coals had done that day.



THE DEAD RESTORED TO LIFE

Messer Gentile de' Carisendi, coming from Modona, taketh forth of the sepulcher a lady whom he loveth and who hath been buried for dead. The lady, restored to life, beareth a male child and Messer Gentile restoreth her and her son to Niccoluccio Caccianimico, her husband.

THERE was, in Bologna, a very noble city of Lombardy, a gentleman very notable for virtue and nobility of blood, called Messer Gentile Carisendi, who, being young, became enamored of a noble lady called Madam Catalina, the wife of one Niccoluccio Caccianimico; and for that he was ill repaid of his love by the lady, being named provost of Modona, he betook himself thither, as in despair of her. Meanwhile, Niccoluccio being absent from Bologna and the lady having, for that she was with child, gone to abide at a country house she had maybe three miles distant from the city, she was suddenly seized with a grievous fit of sickness, which overcame her with such violence that it extinguished in her all sign of life, so that she was even adjudged dead of divers physicians; and for that her nearest kinswomen declared themselves to have had it from herself that she had not been so long pregnant that the child could be fully formed, without giving themselves farther concern, they buried her, such as she was, after much lamentation, in one of the vaults of a neighboring church.

The thing was forthright signified by a friend of his to Messer Gentile, who, poor as he had still been of her favor, grieved sore therefor and ultimately said in himself, "Hark-ye, Madam Catalina, thou art dead, thou of whom, what while thou livedst, I could never avail to have so much as a look; wherefore, now thou canst not defend thyself, needs must I take of thee a kiss or two, all dead as thou art." This said, he took order so his going should be secret and it being presently night, he mounted to horse with one of his servants and rode, without halting, till he came whereas the lady was buried and opened the sepulcher with all despatch. Then, entering therein, he laid himself beside

her and putting his face to hers, kissed her again and again with many tears. But presently,—as we see men's appetites never abide content within any limit, but still desire farther, and especially those of lovers,—having bethought himself to tarry there no longer, he said, "Marry, now that I am here, why should I not touch her somedele on the breast? I may never touch her more, nor have I ever yet done so." Accordingly, overcome with this desire, he put his hand into her bosom and holding it there awhile, himseemed he felt her heart beat somewhat. Thereupon, putting aside all fear he sought more diligently and found that she was certainly not dead, scant and feeble as he deemed the life [that lingered in her]; wherefore, with the help of his servant, he brought her forth of the tomb, as softliest he might, and setting her before him on his horse, carried her privily to his house in Bologna.

There was his mother, a worthy and discreet gentlewoman, and she, after she had heard everything at large from her son, moved to compassion, quietly addressed herself by means of hot baths and great fires to recall the strayed life to the lady, who, coming presently to herself, heaved a great sigh and said, "Ah me, where am I?" To which the good lady replied, "Be of good comfort; thou art in safety." Madam Catalina collecting herself, looked about her and knew not aright where she was; but, seeing Messer Gentile before her, she was filled with wonderment and besought his mother to tell her how she came thither; whereupon Messer Gentile related to her everything in order. At this she was sore afflicted, but presently rendered him such thanks as she might and after conjured him, by the love he had erst borne her and of his courtesy, that she might not in his house suffer at his hands aught that should be anywise contrary to her honor and of that of her husband and that, as soon as the day should come, he would suffer her return to her own house. "Madam," answered Messer Gentile, "whatsoever may have been my desire of time past, I purpose not, either at this present or ever henceforth, (since God hath vouchsafed me this grace that He hath restored you to me from death to life, and that by means of the love I have hitherto borne you,) to

use you either here or elsewhere otherwise than as a dear sister; but this my service that I have done you to-night meriteth some recompense; wherefore I would have you deny me not a favor that I shall ask you."

The lady very graciously replied that she was ready to do his desire, so but she might and it were honorable. Then said he, "Madam, your kinsfolk and all the Bolognese believe and hold you for certain to be dead, wherefore there is no one who looketh for you more at home, and therefore I would have you of your favor be pleased to abide quietly here with my mother till such time as I shall return from Modona, which will be soon. And the reason for which I require you of this is that I purpose to make a dear and solemn present of you to your husband in the presence of the most notable citizens of this place." The lady, confessing herself beholden to the gentleman and that his request was an honorable one, determined to do as he asked, how much soever she desired to gladden her kinsfolk of her life, and so she promised it to him upon her faith. Hardly had she made an end of her reply, when she felt the time of her delivery to be come and not long after, being lovingly tended of Messer Gentile's mother, she gave birth to a goodly male child which manifold redoubled his gladness and her own. Messer Gentile took order that all things needful should be forthcoming and that she should be tended as she were his proper wife and presently returned in secret to Modona. There, having served the term of his office and being about to return to Bologna, he took order for the holding of a great and goodly banquet at his house on the morning he was to enter the city, and thereto he bade many gentlemen of the place, amongst whom was Niccoluccio Caccianimico. Accordingly, when he returned and dismounted, he found them all awaiting him, as likewise the lady, fairer and sounder than ever, and her little son, in good case, and with inexpressible joy seating his guests at table, he let serve them magnificently with various meats.

Whenas the repast was near its end, having first told the lady what he meant to do and taken order with her of the course that she should hold, he began to speak thus: "Gen-

lemen, I remember to have heard whiles that there is in Persia a custom and to my thinking a pleasant one, to wit, that, whenas any is minded supremely to honor a friend of his, he biddeth him to his house and there showeth him the thing, be it wife or mistress or daughter or whatsoever else, he holdeth most dear, avouching that, like as he showeth him this, even so, an he might, would he yet more willingly show him his very heart; which custom I purpose to observe in Bologna. You, of your favor, have honored my banquet with your presence, and I in turn mean to honor you, after the Persian fashion, by showing you the most precious thing I have or may ever have in the world. But, ere I proceed with this, I pray you tell me what you deem of a doubt which I shall broach to you and which is this. A certain person hath in his house a very faithful and good servant, who falleth grievously sick, whereupon the former, without awaiting the sick man's end, letteth carry him into the middle street and hath no more heed of him. Cometh a stranger, who, moved to compassion of the sick man, carrieth him off to his own house and with great diligence and expense bringeth him again to his former health. Now I would fain know whether, if he keep him and make use of his services, his former master can in equity complain of or blame the second, if, he demanding him again, the latter refuse to restore him."

The gentlemen, after various discourse among themselves, concurring all in one opinion, committed the response to Niccoluccio Caccianimico, for that he was a goodly and eloquent speaker; whereupon the latter, having first commended the Persian usage, declared that he and all the rest were of opinion that the first master had no longer any right in his servant, since he had, in such a circumstance, not only abandoned him, but cast him away, and that, for the kind offices done him by the second, themseemed the servant was justly become his; wherefore, in keeping him, he did the first no hurt, no violence, no unright whatsoever. The other guests at table (and there were men there of worth and worship) said all of one accord that they held to that which had been answered by Niccoluccio; and Messer Gentile, well pleased with this response and that Niccoluccio

had made it, avouched himself also to be of the same opinion. Then said he, "It is now time that I honor you according to promise," and calling two of his servants, dispatched them to the lady, whom he had let magnificently dress and adorn, praying her to be pleased to come gladden the company with her presence. Accordingly, she took her little son, who was very handsome, in her arms and coming into the banquet-hall, attended by two serving-men, seated herself, as Messer Gentile willed it, by the side of a gentleman of high standing. Then said he, "Gentlemen, this is the thing which I hold and purpose to hold dearer than any other; look if it seem to you that I have reason to do so."

The guests having paid her the utmost honor, commending her amain and declaring to Messer Gentile that he might well hold her dear, fell to looking upon her; and there were many there who had avouched her to be herself, had they not held her for dead. But Niccoluccio gazed upon her above all and unable to contain himself, asked her, (Messer Gentile having withdrawn awhile,) as one who burned to know who she was, if she were a Bolognese lady or a foreigner. The lady, seeing herself questioned of her husband, hardly restrained herself from answering; but yet, to observe the appointed ordinance, she held her peace. Another asked her if the child were hers and a third if she were Messer Gentile's wife or anywise akin to him; but she made them no reply. Presently, Messer Gentile coming up, one of his guests said to him, "Sir, this is a fair creature of yours, but she seemeth to us mute; is she so?" "Gentlemen," replied he, "her not having spoken at this present is no small proof of her virtue." And the other said, "Tell us, then, who she is." Quoth Messer Gentile, "That will I gladly, so but you will promise me that none, for aught that I shall say, will budge from his place till such time as I shall have made an end of my story."

All promised this and the tables being presently removed, Messer Gentile, seating himself beside the lady, said, "Gentlemen, this lady is that loyal and faithful servant, of whom I questioned you awhile ago and who, being held little dear of her folk and so, as a thing without worth and

no longer useful, cast out into the midward of the street, was by me taken up; yea, by my solicitude and my handiwork I brought her forth of the jaws of death, and God, having regard to my good intent, hath caused her, by my means, from a frightful corpse become thus beautiful. But, that you may more manifestly apprehend how this betide me, I will briefly declare it to you." Then, beginning from his falling enamored of her, he particularly related to them that which had passed until that time, to the great wonderment of the hearers, and added, "By reason of which things, an you, and especially Niccoluccio, have not changed counsel since awhile ago, the lady is fairly mine, nor can any with just title demand her again of me." To this none made answer; nay, all awaited that which he should say farther; whilst Niccoluccio and the lady and certain of the others who were there wept for compassion.

Then Messer Gentile, rising to his feet and taking the little child in his arms and the lady by the hand, made for Niccoluccio and said to him, "Rise up, gossip, I do not restore thee thy wife, whom thy kinsfolk and hers cast away; nay, but I will well to bestow on thee this lady, my gossip; with this her little son, who, I am assured, was begotten of thee and whom I held at baptism and named Gentile; and I pray thee that she be none the less dear to thee for that she hath abidden near upon three months in my house; for I swear to thee,—by that God who belike caused me aforetime fall in love with her, to the intent that my love might be, as in effect it hath been, the occasion of her deliverance,—that never, whether with father or mother or with thee, hath she lived more chastely than she hath done with my mother in my house." So saying, he turned to the lady and said to her, "Madam, from this time forth I absolve you of every promise made me and leave you free [to return] to Niccoluccio." Then, giving the lady and the child into Niccoluccio's arms, he returned to his seat. Niccoluccio received them with the utmost eagerness, so much the more rejoiced as he was the farther removed from hope thereof, and thanked Messer Gentile, as best he might and knew; whilst the others, who all wept

for compassion, commended the latter amain of this; yea, and he was commended of whosoever heard it. The lady was received in her house with marvelous rejoicing and long beheld with amazement by the Bolognese as one raised from the dead; whilst Messer Gentile ever after abode a friend of Niccoluccio and of his kinsfolk and those of the lady.



THE HEART OF SIR GUILLAUME DE GUARDESTAING

Sir Guillaume de Roussillon giveth his wife to eat the heart of Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing by him slain and loved of her, which she after coming to know, casteth herself from a high casement to the ground and dying, is buried with her lover.

THERE were aforetime in Provence two noble knights, each of whom had castles and vassals under him, called the one Sir Guillaume de Roussillon and the other Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing; and for that they were both men of great prowess in arms, they loved each other with an exceeding love and were wont to go still together and clad in the same colors to every tournament or jousting or other act of arms. Although they abode each in his own castle and were distant, one from other, a good half score miles, yet it came to pass that Sir Guillaume de Roussillon having a very fair and lovesome lady to wife, Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing, notwithstanding the friendship and fellowship that was between them, became beyond measure enamored of her and so wrought, now with one means and now with another, that the lady became aware of his passion and knowing him for a very valiant knight, it pleased her and she began to return his love, insomuch that she desired and tendered nothing more than him nor awaited otherwhat than to be solicited of him; the which was not long in coming to pass and they foregathered once and again.

Loving each other amain and conversing together less discreetly than behooved, it befell that the husband became aware of their familiarity and was mightily incensed thereat, insomuch that the great love he bore to Guardestaing was turned into mortal hatred; but this he knew better to keep hidden than the two lovers had known to conceal their love and was fully resolved in himself to kill them. Roussillon being in this mind, it befell that the great tourneying was

proclaimed in France, the which he forthright signified to Guardestaing and sent to bid him come to him, an it pleased him, so they might take counsel together if and how they should go thither; whereto the other very joyously answered that he would without fail come to sup with him on the ensuing day. Roussillon, hearing this, thought the time come whenas he might avail to kill him and accordingly on the morrow he armed himself and mounting to horse with a servant of his, lay at ambush, maybe a mile from his castle, in a wood whereas Guardestaing must pass.

There after he had awaited him a good while, he saw him come, unarmed and followed by two servants in like case, as one who apprehended nothing from him; and when he saw him come whereas he would have him, he rushed out upon him, lance in hand, full of rage and malice, crying, "Traitor, thou art dead!" And to say thus and to plunge the lance into his breast were one and the same thing. Guardestaing, without being able to make any defense or even to say a word, fell from his horse, transfixed of the lance, and a little after died; whilst his servants, without waiting to learn who had done this, turned their horses' heads and fled, as quickliest they might, toward their lord's castle. Roussillon dismounted and opening the dead man's breast with a knife, with his own hands tore out his heart, which he let wrap in the pennon of a lance and gave to one of his men to carry. Then, commanding that none should dare make words of the matter, he remounted, it being now night, and returned to his castle.

The lady, who had heard that Guardestaing was to be there that evening to supper and looked for him with the utmost impatience, seeing him not come, marveled sore and said to her husband, "How is it, sir, that Guardestaing is not come?" "Wife," answered he, "I have had [word] from him that he cannot be here till to-morrow;" whereat the lady abode somewhat troubled. Roussillon then dismounted and calling the cook, said to him, "Take this wild boar's heart and look thou make a dainty dish thereof, the best and most delectable to eat that thou knowest, and when I am at table send it to me in a silver porringer." The cook accordingly took the heart and putting all his art

thereto and all his diligence, minced it and seasoning it with store of rich spices, made of it a very dainty ragout.

When it was time, Sir Guillaume sat down to table with his wife and the viands came; but he ate little, being hindered in thought for the ill deed he had committed. Presently the cook sent him the ragout, which he caused set before the lady, feigning himself disordered that evening and commending the dish to her amain. The lady, who was in nowise squeamish, tasted thereof and finding it good, ate it all: which when the knight saw, he said to her, "Wife, how deem you of this dish?" "In good sooth, my lord," answered she, "it liketh me exceedingly." Whereupon, "So God be mine aid," quoth Roussillon, "I do indeed believe it you, nor do I marvel if that please you, dead, which, alive, pleased you more than aught else." The lady, hearing this, hesitated awhile, then said, "How? What have you made me eat?" "This that you have eaten," answered the knight, "was in very truth the heart of Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing, whom you, disloyal wife as you are, so loved; and know for certain that it is his very heart, for that I tore it from his breast with these hands a little before my return."

It needeth not to ask if the lady were woebegone, hearing this of him whom she loved more than aught else; and after awhile she said, "You have done the deed of a disloyal and base knight, as you are; for, if I, unenforced of him, made him lord of my love and therein offended against you, not he, but I should have borne the penalty thereof. But God forfend that ever other victual should follow upon such noble meat as the heart of so valiant and so courteous a gentleman as was Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing!" Then, rising to her feet, without any manner of hesitation, she let herself fall backward through a window which was behind her and which was exceeding high above the ground; wherefore, as she fell, she was not only killed, but well nigh broken in pieces.

Sir Guillaume, seeing this, was sore dismayed and him-seemed he had done ill; wherefore, being adread of the country people and of the Count of Provence, he let saddle his horse and made off. On the morrow it was known all over

the country how the thing had passed; whereupon the two bodies were, with the utmost grief and lamentation, taken up by Guardestaing's people and those of the lady and laid in one same sepulcher in the chapel of the latter's own castle; and thereover were verses written, signifying who these were that were buried therewithin and the manner and occasion of their death.



THE STORY OF THE CHEST

Two men consorting together, one loveth the wife of his comrade, who becoming aware thereof, doth with her on such wise that the other is shut up in a chest, upon which he solaced himself with his wife, he being inside the while.

THERE were once in Siena two young men in easy enough case and of good city families, whereof one was named Spinelloccio Tanena and the other Zeppa di Mino, and they were next-door neighbors in Camollia. These two young men still companied together and loved each other, to all appearance, as they had been brothers, or better; and each of them had a very fair wife. It chanced that Spinelloccio, by dint of much frequenting Zeppa's house, both when the latter was at home and when he was abroad, grew very private with his wife and on this wise they abode a pretty while, before any became aware thereof. However, at last, one day, Zeppa being at home, unknown to his wife, Spinelloccio came to call him and the lady said that he was abroad; whereupon the other came straightway up into the house and finding her in the saloon and seeing none else there, he took her in his arms and fell to kissing her and she him. Zeppa, who saw this, made no sign, but abode hidden to see in what the game should result and presently saw his wife and Spinelloccio betake themselves, thus embraced, to a chamber and there lock themselves in; whereat he was sore angered. But, knowing that his injury would not become less for making an outcry nor for otherwhat, nay, that shame would but wax, therefor, he set himself to think what revenge he should take thereof, so his soul might abide content, without the thing being known all about, and himseeming, after long consideration, he had found the means, he abode hidden so long as Spinelloccio remained with his wife.

As soon as the other was gone away, he entered the chamber and there finding the lady, who had not yet made an end of adjusting her head-veils, which Spinelloccio had plucked down in dallying with her, said to her, "Wife,

what dost thou?" Quoth she, "Seest thou not?" And Zeppa answered, "Ay, indeed, I have seen more than I could wish." So saying, he taxed her with that which had passed and she, in sore affright, confessed to him, after much parley, that which she could not aptly deny of her familiarity with Spinelloccio. Then she began to crave him pardon, weeping, and Zeppa said to her, "Harkye, wife, thou hast done ill, and if thou wilt have me pardon it to thee, bethink thee punctually to do that which I shall enjoin thee, which is this; I will have thee bid Spinelloccio find an occasion to part company with me to-morrow morning, towards tierce, and come hither to thee. When he is here I will come back and so soon as thou hearest me, do thou make him enter this chest here and lock him therein. Then, when thou shalt have done this, I will tell thee what else thou shalt do; and have thou no fear of doing this, for that I promise thee I will do him no manner of hurt." The lady, to satisfy him, promised to do his bidding, and so she did.

The morrow come and Zeppa and Spinelloccio being together towards tierce, the latter, who had promised the lady to be with her at that hour, said to the former, "I am to dine this morning with a friend, whom I would not keep waiting for me; wherefore God be with thee." Quoth Zeppa, "It is not dinner-time yet awhile," but Spinelloccio answered, "No matter; I am to speak with him also of an affair of mine, so that needs must I be there betimes." Accordingly, taking leave of him, he fetched a compass and making for Zeppa's house, entered a chamber with the latter's wife. He had not been there long ere Zeppa returned, whom when the lady heard, feigning to be mightily affrighted, she made him take refuge in the chest, as her husband had bidden her, and locking him therein, went forth of the chamber. Zeppa, coming up, said, "Wife, is it dinner-time?" "Ay," answered she, "forthright." Quoth he, "Spinelloccio is gone to dine this morning with a friend of his and hath left his wife alone; get thee to the window and call her and bid her come dine with us." The lady, fearing for herself, and grown therefore mighty obedient, did as he bade her and Spinelloccio's wife, being much

pressed by her and hearing that her own husband was to dine abroad, came thither.

Zeppa made much of her and whispering his wife begone into the kitchen, took her familiarly by the hand and carried her into the chamber, wherein no sooner were they come than, turning back, he locked the door within. When the lady saw him do this, she said, "Alack, Zeppa, what meaneth this? Have you then brought me hither for this? Is this the love you bear Spinelloccio and the loyal companionship you practise towards him?" Whereupon quoth Zeppa, drawing near to the chest wherein was her husband locked up, and holding her fast, "Madam, ere thou complainest, hearken to that which I have to say to thee. I have loved and love Spinelloccio as a brother, and yesterday, albeit he knoweth it not, I found that the trust I had in him was come to this, that he lieth with my wife even as with thee. Now, for that I love him, I purpose not to take vengeance of him, save on such wise as the offence hath been; he hath had my wife and I mean to have thee. An thou wilt not, needs must I take him here and for that I mean not to let this affront go unpunished, I will play him such a turn that neither thou nor he shall ever again be glad." The lady, hearing this and believing what Zeppa said, after many affirmations made her of him, replied, "Zeppa mine, since this vengeance is to fall on me, I am content, so but thou wilt contrive, notwithstanding what we are to do, that I may abide at peace with thy wife, even as I intend to abide with her, notwithstanding this that she hath done to me." "Assuredly," rejoined Zeppa, "I will do it; and to boot, I will give thee a precious and fine jewel as none other thou hast." So saying, he embraced her; then, laying her flat on the chest, there to his heart's content he solaced himself with her, and she with him.

Spinelloccio, hearing from within the chest all that Zeppa said and his wife's answer and feeling the morris-dance that was toward over his head, was at the first so sore despited that himseemed he should die; and but that he stood in fear of Zeppa, he had rated his wife finely, shut up as he was. However, bethinking himself that the offence had begun with him and that Zeppa was in his right to do

as he did and had indeed borne himself towards him humanely and like a comrade, he presently resolved in himself to be, an he would, more than ever his friend. Zeppa, having been with the lady so long as it pleased him, dismounted from the chest, and she asking for the promised jewel, he opened the chamber-door and called his wife, who said nought else than "Madam, you have given me a loaf for my bannock;" and this she said laughing. To her quoth Zeppa, "Open this chest." Accordingly she opened it and therein Zeppa showed the lady her husband, saying, "Here is the jewel I promised thee." It were hard to say which was the more abashed of the twain, Spinelloccio, seeing Zeppa and knowing that he knew what he had done, or his wife, seeing her husband and knowing that he had both heard and felt that which she had done over his head. But Spinelloccio, coming forth of the chest, said, without more parley, "Zeppa, we are quits; wherefore it is well, as thou saidst but now to my wife, that we be still friends as we were, and that, since there is nothing unshared between us two but our wives, we have these also in common." Zeppa was content and they all four dined together in the utmost possible harmony; and thenceforward each of the two ladies had two husbands and each of the latter two wives, without ever having any strife or grudge anent the matter.



BERNABO OF GENOA WAGERS ON HIS WIFE'S HONESTY

Bernabo of Genoa, duped by Ambrogiuolo, loseth his good and commandeth that his innocent wife be put to death. She escapeth and serveth the Soldan in a man's habit. Here she lighteth upon the deceiver of her husband and bringeth the latter to Alexandria, where, her traducer being punished, she resumeth woman's apparel and returneth to Genoa with her husband, rich.

THERE were once at Paris⁶ in an inn certain very considerable Italian merchants, who were come thither, according to their usance, some on one occasion and some on another, and having one evening among others supper all together merrily, they fell to devising of divers matters, and passing from one discourse to another, they came at last to speak of their wives, whom they had left at home, and one said jestingly, "I know not how mine doth; but this I know well, that, whenas there cometh to my hand here any lass that pleaseth me, I leave on one side the love I bear my wife and get what amusement I may from the other." "And I," quoth another, "do likewise, for that if I believe that my wife pusheth her fortunes [in my absence], she doth it, and if I believe it not, still she doth it; wherefore tit for tat be it; an ass still getteth as good as he giveth." A third, following on, came well nigh to the same conclusion, and in brief all seemed agreed upon this point, that the wives they left behind had no mind to lose time in their husbands' absence. One only, who hight Bernabo Lomellini of Genoa, maintained the contrary, avouching that he, by special grace of God, had a lady to wife who was belike the most accomplished woman of all Italy in all those qualities which a lady, nay, even (in great part) in those which a knight or an esquire, should have; for that she was fair of favor and yet in her first youth and adroit and robust of her person; nor was there aught that pertaineth unto a woman, such as works of broidery in silk

and the like, but she did it better than any other of her sex. Moreover, said he, there was no sewer, or in other words, no serving-man, alive who served better or more deftly at a nobleman's table than did she, for that she was very well bred and exceeding wise and discreet. He after went on to extol her as knowing better how to ride a horse and fly a hawk, to read and write and cast a reckoning than if she were a merchant; and thence, after many other commendations, coming to that whereof it had been discoursed among them, he avouched with an oath that there could be found no honester nor chaster woman than she; wherefore he firmly believed that, should he abide half a score years, or even always, from home, she would never incline to the least levity with another man. Among the merchants who discoursed thus was a young man called Ambrogiuolo of Piacenza, who fell to making the greatest mock in the world of this last commendation bestowed by Bernabo upon his wife and asked him scoffingly if the emperor had granted him that privilege over and above all other men. Bernabo, some little nettled, replied that not the emperor, but God, who could somewhat more than the emperor, had vouchsafed him the favor in question. Whereupon quoth Ambrogiuolo, "Bernabo, I doubt not a whit but that thou thinkest to say sooth; but meseemeth thou hast paid little regard to the nature of things; for that, hast thou taken heed thereunto, I deem thee not so dull of wit but thou wouldst have noted therein certain matters which had made thee speak more circumspectly on this subject. And that thou mayst not think that we, who have spoken much at large of our wives, believe that we have wives other or otherwise made than thine, but mayst see that we spoke thus, moved by natural perception, I will e'en reason with thee a little on this matter. I have always understood man to be the noblest animal created of God among mortals, and after him, woman; but man, as is commonly believed and as is seen by works, is the more perfect and having more perfection, must without fail have more of firmness and constancy, for that women universally are more changeable; the reason whereof might be shown by many natural arguments, which for the present I purpose to leave be. If then man be of

more stability and yet cannot keep himself, let alone from complying with a woman who soliciteth him, but even from desiring one who pleaseth him, nay more, from doing what he can, so he may avail to be with her,—and if this betide him not once a month, but a thousand times a day,—what canst thou expect a woman, naturally unstable, to avail against the prayers, the blandishments, the gifts and a thousand other means which an adroit man, who loveth her, will use? Thinkest thou she can hold out? Certes, how much soever thou mayst affirm it, I believe not that thou believest it; and thou thyself sayest that thy wife is a woman and that she is of flesh and blood, as are other women. If this be so, those same desires must be hers and the same powers that are in other women to resist these natural appetites; wherefore, however honest she be, it is possible she may do that which other women do; and nothing that is possible should be so peremptorily denied nor the contrary thereof affirmed with such rigor as thou dost.” To which Bernabo made answer, saying, “I am a merchant, and not a philosopher, and as a merchant I will answer; and I say that I acknowledge that what thou sayst may happen to foolish women in whom there is no shame; but those who are discreet are so careful of their honor that for the guarding thereof they become stronger than men, who reckon not of this; and of those thus fashioned is my wife.” “Indeed,” rejoined Ambrogiuolo, “if, for every time they occupy themselves with toys of this kind, there sprouted from their foreheads a horn to bear witness of that which they have done, there be few, I believe, who would incline thereto; but, far from the horn sprouting, there appeareth neither trace nor token thereof in those who are discreet, and shame and soil of honor consist not but in things discovered; wherefore, whenas they may secretly, they do it, or, if they forbear, it is for stupidity. And have thou this for certain that she alone is chaste, who hath either never been solicited of any or who, having herself solicited, hath not been hearkened. And although I know by natural and true reasons that it is e’en as I say, yet should I not speak thereof with so full an assurance, had I not many a time and with many women made essay thereof. And this I tell

thee, that, were I near this most sanctified wife of thine, I warrant me I would in brief space of time bring her to that which I have already gotten of other women." Whereupon quoth Bernabo, "Disputing with words might be prolonged without end; thou wouldst say and I should say, and in the end it would all amount to nothing. But, since thou wilt have it that all women are so compliant and that thine address is such, I am content, so I may certify thee of my wife's honesty, to have my head cut off, an thou canst anywise avail to bring her to do thy pleasure in aught of the kind; and if thou fail thereof, I will have thee lose no otherwhat than a thousand gold florins." "Bernabo," replied Ambrogiuolo, who was not grown heated over the dispute, "I know not what I should do with thy blood, if I won the wager; but, an thou have a mind to see proof of that which I have advanced, do thou stake five thousand gold florins of thy monies, which should be less dear to thee than thy head, against a thousand of mine, and whereas thou settest no limit [of time], I will e'en bind myself to go to Genoa and within three months from the day of my departure hence to have done my will of thy wife and to bring back with me, in proof thereof, sundry of her most precious things and such and so many tokens that thou shalt thyself confess it to be truth, so verily thou wilt pledge me thy faith not to come to Genoa within that term nor write her aught of the matter." Bernabo said that it liked him well and albeit the other merchants endeavored to hinder the affair, foreseeing that sore mischief might come thereof, the two merchants' minds were so inflamed that, in despite of the rest, they bound themselves one to other by express writings under their hands. This done, Bernabo abode behind, whilst Ambrogiuolo, as quickliest he might, betook himself to Genoa. There he abode some days and informed himself with the utmost precaution of the name of the street where the lady dwelt and of her manner of life, understood of her that and more than that which he had heard of her from Bernabo, wherefore himseemed he was come on a fool's errand. However, he presently clapped up an acquaintance with a poor woman, who was much about the house and whose great well-wisher the lady was,

and availing not to induce her to aught else, he debauched her with money and prevailed with her to bring him, in a chest wroughten after a fashion of his own, not only into the house, but into the gentlewoman's very bedchamber, where, according to the ordinance given her of him, the good woman commended it to her care for some days, as if she had a mind to go somewhither. The chest, then, being left in the chamber and the night come, Ambrogiuolo, what time he judged the lady to be asleep, opened the chest with certain engines of his and came softly out into the chamber, where there was a light burning, with whose aid he proceeded to observe the ordinance of the place, the paintings and every other notable thing that was therein and fixed them in his memory. Then, drawing near the bed and perceiving that the lady and a little girl, who was with her, were fast asleep, he quietly examined the lady as she lay there in her sleep, but saw no sign about her that he might carry away, save one, to wit, a mole which she had on her chest and which would not be seen when she was fully attired. This noted, he turned softly away, though she and the child were so beauteous to look upon that he was himself sore tempted to fall in love with her; however, for that he had heard her to be so obdurate and uncomplying in matters of this kind, he hazarded not himself, but, abiding at his leisure in the chamber the most part of the night, took from one of her coffers a purse and a night-rail, together with sundry rings and girdles, and laying them all in his chest, returned thither himself and shut himself up therein as before; and on this wise he did two nights, without the lady being ware of aught. On the third day the good woman came back for the chest, according to the given ordinance, and carried it off whence she had taken it, whereupon Ambrogiuolo came out and having rewarded her according to promise, returned, as quickliest he might, with the things aforesaid, to Paris, where he arrived before the term appointed. There he summoned the merchants who had been present at the dispute and the laying of the wager and declared, in Bernabo's presence, that he had won the wager laid between them, for that he had accomplished that whereof he had vaunted himself; and to prove this to

be true, he first described the fashion of the chamber and the paintings thereof and after showed the things he had brought with him thence, avouching that he had them of herself. Bernabo confessed the chamber to be as he had said and owned, moreover, that he recognized the things in question as being in truth his wife's; but said that he might have learned from one of the servants of the house the fashion of the chamber and have gotten the things in like manner; wherefore, an he had nought else to say, him-seemed not that this should suffice to prove him to have won. Whereupon quoth Ambrogiuolo, "In sooth this should suffice; but, since thou wilt have me say more, I will say it. I tell thee that Madam Ginevra thy wife hath under her left pap a pretty big mole, about which are maybe half a dozen little hairs as red as gold." When Bernabo heard this, it was as if he had gotten a knife-thrust in the heart, such anguish did he feel, and though he had said not a word, his countenance, being all changed, gave very manifest token that what Ambrogiuolo said was true. Then, after awhile, "Gentlemen," quoth he, "that which Ambrogiuolo saith is true; wherefore, he having won, let him come whenassoever it pleaseth him and he shall be paid." Accordingly, on the ensuing day Ambrogiuolo was paid in full and Bernabo, departing Paris, betook himself to Genoa with fell intent against the lady. When he drew near the city, he would not enter therein, but lighted down a good score miles away at a country house of his and despatched one of his servants, in whom he much trusted, to Genoa with two horses and letters under his hand, advising his wife that he had returned and bidding her come to him; and he privily charged the man, whenas he should be with the lady in such place as should seem best to him, to put her to death without pity and return to him. The servant accordingly repaired to Genoa and delivering the letters and doing his errand, was received with great rejoicing by the lady, who on the morrow took horse with him and set out for their country house. As they fared on together, discoursing of one thing and another, they came to a very deep and lonely valley, beset with high rocks and trees, which seeming to the servant a place wherein he might, with assurance for him-

self, do his lord's commandment, he pulled out his knife and taking the lady by the arm, said, "Madam, commend your soul to God, for needs must you die, without faring farther." The lady, seeing the knife and hearing these words, was all dismayed and said, "Mercy, for God's sake! Ere thou slay me, tell me wherein I have offended thee, that thou wouldst put me to death." "Madam," answered the man, "me you have nowise offended; but wherein you have offended your husband I know not, save that he hath commanded me slay you by the way, without having any pity upon you, threatening me, and I did it not, to have me hanged by the neck. You know well how much I am beholden to him and how I may not gainsay him in aught that he may impose upon me; God knoweth it irketh me for you, but I can do no otherwise." Whereupon quoth the lady, weeping, "Alack, for God's sake, consent not to become the murderer of one who hath never wronged thee, to serve another! God who knoweth all knoweth that I never did aught for which I should receive such a recompense from my husband. But let that be; thou mayest, an thou wilt, at once content God and thy master and me, on this wise; to wit, that thou take these my clothes and give me but thy doublet and a hood and with the former return to my lord and thine and tell him that thou hast slain me; and I swear to thee, by that life which thou wilt have bestowed on me, that I will remove hence and get gone into a country whence never shall any news of me win either to him or to thee or into these parts." The servant, who was loath to slay her, was lightly moved, to compassion; wherefore he took her clothes and gave her a sorry doublet of his and a hood, leaving her sundry monies she had with her. Then praying her depart the country, he left her in the valley and afoot and betook himself to his master, to whom he avouched that not only was his commandment accomplished, but that he had left the lady's dead body among a pack of wolves, and Bernabo presently returned to Genoa, where, the thing becoming known, he was much blamed. As for the lady, she abode alone and disconsolate till night-fall, when she disguised herself as most she might and repaired to a village hard by, where, having gotten from an

old woman that which she needed, she fitted the doublet to her shape and shortening it, making a pair of linen breeches of her shift; then, having cut her hair and altogether transformed herself in the guise of a sailor, she betook herself to the seashore, where, as chance would have it, she found a Catalan gentleman, by name Senor Encarrarch, who had landed at Alba from a ship he had in the offing, to refresh himself at a spring there. With him she entered into parley and engaging with him as a servant, embarked on board the ship, under the name of Sicurano da Finale. There, being furnished by the gentleman with better clothes, she proceeded to serve him so well and so aptly that she became in the utmost favor with him. No great while after it befell that the Catalan made a voyage to Alexandria with a lading of his and carrying thither certain peregrine falcons for the Soldan, presented them to him. The Soldan, having once and again entertained him at meat and noting with approof the fashions of Sicurano, who still went serving him, begged him of his master, who yielded him to him, although it irked him to do it, and Sicurano, in a little while, by this good behavior, gained the love and favor of the Soldan, even as he had gained that of the Catalan. Wherefore, in process of time, it befell that—the time coming for a great assemblage, in the guise of a fair, of merchants, both Christian and Saracen, which was wont at a certain season of the year to be held in Acre, a town under the seignory of the Soldan, and to which, in order that the merchants and their merchandise might rest secure, the latter was still used to despatch, beside other his officers, some one of his chief men, with troops, to look to the guard,—he bethought himself to send Sicurano, who was by this well versed in the language of the country, on this service; and so he did. Sicurano accordingly came to Acre as governor and captain of the guard of the merchants and their merchandise and there well and diligently doing that which pertained to his office and going round looking about him, saw many merchants there, Sicilians and Pisans and Genoese and Venetians and other Italians, with whom he was fain to make acquaintance, in remembrance of his country. It befell, one time amongst others, that, having lighted down at the shop of

certain Venetian merchants, he espied, among other trinkets, a purse and a girdle, which he straightway knew for having been his and marveled thereat; but, without making any sign, he carelessly asked to whom they pertained and if they were for sale. Now Ambrogiuolo of Piacenza was come thither with much merchandise on board a Venetian ship and hearing the captain of the guard ask whose the trinkets were, came forward and said, laughing, "Sir, the things are mine and I do not sell them; but, if they please you, I will gladly give them to you." Sicurano, seeing him laugh, misdoubted he had recognized him by some gesture of his; but yet, keeping a steady countenance, he said, "Belike thou laughest to see me, a soldier, go questioning of these women's toys?" "Sir," answered Ambrogiuolo, "I laugh not at that; nay, but at the way I came by them." "Marry, then," said Sicurano, "an it be not unspeakable, tell me how thou gottest them, so God give thee good luck." Quoth Ambrogiuolo, "Sir, a gentlewoman of Genoa, hight Madam Ginevra, wife of Bernabo Lomellini, gave me these things, with certain others, one night that I lay with her, and prayed me keep them for the love of her. Now I laugh for that I mind me of the simplicity of Bernabo, who was fool enough to lay five thousand florins to one that I would not bring his wife to do my pleasure; the which I did and won the wager; whereupon he, who should rather have punished himself for his stupidity than her for doing that which all women do, returned from Paris to Genoa and there, by what I have since heard, caused her put to death." Sicurano, hearing this, understood forthwith what was the cause of Bernabo's anger against his wife and manifestly perceiving this fellow to have been the occasion of all her ills, determined not to let him go unpunished therefor. Accordingly he feigned to be greatly diverted with the story and artfully clapped up a strait acquaintance with him, insomuch that, the fair being ended, Ambrogiuolo, at his instance, accompanied him, with all his good, to Alexandria. Here Sicurano let build him a warehouse and lodged in his hands store of his own monies; and Ambrogiuolo, foreseeing great advantage to himself, willingly took up his abode there. Meanwhile, Sicurano, careful to make Bernabo clear of his

innocence, rested not till, by means of certain great Genoese merchants who were then in Alexandria, he had, on some plausible occasion of his own devising, caused him come thither, where, finding him in poor enough case, he had him privily entertained by a friend of his against it should seem to him time to do that which he purposed. Now he had already made Ambrogiuolo recount his story before the Soldan for the latter's diversion; but, seeing Bernabo there and thinking there was no need to use farther delay in the matter, he took occasion to procure the Soldan to have Ambrogiuolo and Bernabo brought before him and in the latter's presence, to extort from the former, by dint of severity, an it might not easily be done [by other means], the truth of that whereof he vaunted himself concerning Bernabo's wife. Accordingly, they both being come, the Soldan, in the presence of many, with a stern countenance commanded Ambrogiuolo to tell the truth how he had won of Bernabo the five thousand gold florins; and Sicurano himself, in whom he most trusted, with a yet angrier aspect, threatened him with the most grievous torments, an he told it not; whereupon Ambrogiuolo, affrighted on one side and another and in a measure constrained, in the presence of Bernabo and many others, plainly related everything, even as it passed, expecting no worse punishment therefor than the restitution of the five thousand gold florins and of the stolen trinkets. He having spoken, Sicurano, as he were the Soldan's minister in the matter, turned to Bernabo, and said to him, "And thou, what didst thou to thy lady for this lie?" Whereto Bernabo replied, "Overcome with wrath for the loss of my money and with resentment for the shame which meseemed I had gotten from my wife, I caused a servant of mine put her to death, and according to that which he reported to me, she was straightway devoured by a multitude of wolves." These things said in the presence of the Soldan and all heard and apprehended of him, albeit he knew not yet to what end Sicurano, who had sought and ordered this, would fain come, the latter said to him, "My lord, you may very clearly see how much reason yonder poor lady had to vaunt herself of her gallant and her husband, for that the former at once bereaved her of honor,

marring her fair fame with lies, and despoiled her husband, whilst the latter, more credulous of others' falsehoods than of the truth which he might by long experience have known, caused her to be slain and eaten of wolves; and moreover, such is the goodwill and the love borne her by the one and the other that, having long abidden with her, neither of them knoweth her. But, that you may the better apprehend that which each of these hath deserved, I will—so but you vouchsafe me, of special favor, to punish the deceiver and pardon the dupe,—e'en cause her come hither into your and their presence." The Soldan, disposed in the matter altogether to comply with Sicurano's wishes, answered that he would well and bade him produce the lady; whereat Bernabo marveled exceedingly, for that he firmly believed her to be dead, whilst Ambrogiuolo, now divining his danger, began to be in fear of worse than paying of monies and knew not whether more to hope or to fear from the coming of the lady, but awaited her appearance with the utmost amazement. The Soldan, then, having accorded Sicurano his wish, the latter threw himself, weeping, on his knees before him and putting off, as it were at one and the same time, his manly voice and masculine demeanor, said, "My lord, I am the wretched misfortunate Ginevra, who have these six years gone wandering in man's disguise about the world, having been foully and wickedly aspersed by this traitor Ambrogiuolo and given by yonder cruel and unjust man to one of his servants to be slain and eaten of wolves." Then, tearing open the fore part of her clothes and showing her breast, she discovered herself to the Soldan and all else who were present and after, turning to Ambrogiuolo, indignantly demanded of him when he had ever lain with her, according as he had aforetime boasted; but he, now knowing her, and fallen well nigh dumb for shame, said nothing. The Soldan, who had always held her for a man, seeing and hearing this, fell into such a wonderment that he more than once misdoubted that which he saw and heard to be rather a dream than true. However, after his amazement had abated, apprehending the truth of the matter, he lauded to the utmost the life and fashions of Ginevra, till then called Sicurano, and extolled her constancy and virtue; and letting

bring her very sumptuous woman's apparel and women to attend her, he pardoned Bernabo, in accordance with her request, the death he had merited, whilst the latter, recognizing her, cast himself at her feet, weeping and craving forgiveness, which she, ill worthy as he was thereof, graciously accorded him and raising him to his feet, embraced him tenderly, as her husband. Then the Soldan commanded that Ambrogiuolo should incontinent be bound to a stake and smeared with honey and exposed to the sun in some high place of the city, nor should ever be loosed thence till such time as he should fall of himself; and so was it done. After this he commanded that all that had belonged to him should be given to the lady, the which was not so little but that it outvalued ten thousand doubloons. Moreover, he let make a very goodly banquet, wherein he entertained Bernabo with honor, as Madam Ginevra's husband, and herself as a very valiant lady and gave her, in jewels and vessels of gold and silver and monies, that which amounted to better than other ten thousand doubloons. Then, the banquet over, he caused equip them a ship and gave them leave to return at their pleasure to Genoa, whither accordingly they returned with great joyance and exceeding rich; and there they were received with the utmost honor, especially Madam Ginevra, who was of all believed to be dead and who, while she lived, was still reputed of great worth and virtue. As for Ambrogiuolo, being that same day bounded to the stake and anointed with honey, he was, to his exceeding torment, not only slain, but devoured, of the flies and wasps and gadflies, wherewith that country aboundeth, even to the bones, which latter, waxed white and hanging by the sinews, being left unremoved, long bore witness of his villainy to all who saw them. And on this wise did the deceiver abide at the feet of the deceived.



THE GHOST EXORCISED

Gianni Lotteringhi heareth knock at his door by night and awakeneth his wife, who giveth him to believe that it is a phantom; whereupon they go to exorcise it with a certain orison and the knocking ceaseth.

THERE was once in Florence, in the quarter of San Brancazino, a wool-comber called Gianni Lotteringhi, a man more fortunate in his craft than wise in other things, for that, savoring of the simpleton, he was very often made captain of the Laud singers of Santa Maria Novella and had the governance of their confraternity, and he many a time had other little offices of the same kind, upon which he much valued himself. This betided him for that, being a man of substance, he gave many a good pittance to the clergy, who, getting of him often, this a pair of hose, that a gown and another a scapulary, taught him in return store of goodly orisons and gave him the paternoster in the vulgar tongue, the Song of Saint Alexis, the Lamentations of Saint Bernard, the Canticles of Madam Matilda and the like trumpery, all which he held very dear and kept very diligently for his soul's health. Now he had a very fair and lovesome lady to wife, by name Mistress Tessa, who was the daughter of Mannuccio dalla Cuculia and was exceeding discreet and well advised. She, knowing her husband's simplicity and being enamored of Federigo di Neri Pegolotti, a brisk and handsome youth, and he of her, took order with a serving-maid of hers that he should come speak with her at a very goodly country house which her husband had at Camerata, where she sojourned all the summer and whither Gianni came whiles to sup and sleep, returning in the morning to shop and by times to his Laud singers.

Federigo, who desired this beyond measure, taking his opportunity, repaired thither on the day appointed him towards vespers and Gianni not coming thither that evening, supped and spent the evening in all ease and delight with the lady, who, being a charming hostess, entertained him

with her wit and a goodly repast. Then, neither she nor Federigo purposing that this should be the last, as it had been the first time [of their foregathering], they took order together on this wise, so it should not be needful to send the maid for him each time, to wit, that every day, as he came and went to and from a place he had a little farther on, he should keep his eye on a vineyard that adjoined the house, where he would see an ass's skull set up on one of the vine poles, which whenas he saw with the muzzle turned towards Florence, he should without fail and in all assurance betake himself to her that evening after dark; and if he found the door shut, he should knock softly thrice and she would open to him; but that, whenas he saw the ass's muzzle turned towards Fiesole, he should not come, for that Gianni would be there; and doing on this wise, they foregathered many a time.

But once, amongst other times, it chanced that, Federigo being one night to sup with Mistress Tessa and she having let cook two fat capons, Gianni, who was not expected there that night, came thither very late, whereat the lady was much chagrined and having supped with her husband on a piece of salt pork, which she had let boil apart, caused the maid wrap the two boiled capons in a white napkin and carry them, together with good store of new-laid eggs and a flask of good wine, into a garden she had, whither she could go, without passing through the house, and where she was wont to sup whiles with her lover, bidding her lay them at the foot of a peach-tree that grew beside a lawn there. But such was her trouble and annoy that she remembered not to bid the maid wait till Federigo should come and tell him that Gianni was there and that he should take the viands from the garden; wherefore, she and Gianni betaking themselves to bed and the maid likewise, it was not long before Federigo came to the door and knocked softly once. The door was so near to the bedchamber that Gianni heard it incontinent, as also did the lady; but she made as how of being asleep, so her husband might have no suspicion of her. After waiting a little, Federigo knocked a second time, whereupon Gianni, marveling, nudged his wife somewhat and said, "Tessa, hearest thou what I hear? Meseemeth there is a knocking at our door."

The lady, who had heard it much better than he, made a show of awaking and said, "Eh? How sayest thou?" "I say," answered Gianni, "that meseemeth there is a knocking at our door." "Knocking!" cried she. "Alack, Gianni mine, knowest thou not what it is? It is a phantom, that hath these last few nights given me the greatest fright that ever was, insomuch that, whenas I hear it, I put my head under the clothes and dare not bring it out again until it is broad day." Quoth Gianni, "Go to, wife; have no fear, if it be so; for I said the *Te Lucis* and the *Intemerata* and such and such other pious orisons, before we lay down, and crossed the bed from side to side, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, so that we have no need to fear, for that, what power soever it have, it cannot avail to harm us."

The lady, fearing lest Federigo should perchance suspect otherwhat and be angered with her, determined at all hazards to arise and let him know that Gianni was there; wherefore quoth she to her husband, "That is all very well; thou sayst thy words, thou; but, for my part, I shall never hold myself safe nor secure, except we exorcise it, since thou art here." "And how is it to be exorcised?" asked he; and she, "I know full well how to exorcise it; for, the other day, when I went to the Pardon at Fiesole, a certain anchoress (the very holiest of creatures, Gianni mine, God only can say how holy she is), seeing me thus fearful, taught me a pious and effectual orison and told me that she had made trial of it several times, ere she became a recluse, and that it had always availed her. God knoweth I should never have dared go alone to make proof of it; but, now that thou art here, I would have us go exorcise the phantom."

Gianni answered that he would well and accordingly they both arose and went softly to the door, without which Federigo, who now began to misdoubt him of somewhat, was yet in waiting. When they came thither, the lady said to Gianni, "Do thou spit, whenas I shall bid thee." And he answered, "Good." Then she began the conjuration and said, "Phantom, phantom, that goest by night, with tail upright thou cam'st to us; now get thee gone, with tail upright. Begone into the garden to the foot of the great

peach-tree; there shalt thou find an anointed twice-anointed one and an hundred turds of my setting hen; set thy mouth to the flagon and get thee gone again and do thou no hurt to my Gianni nor me." Then to her husband, "Spit, Gianni," quoth she, and he spat. Federigo, who heard all this from without and was now quit of jealousy, had, for all his vexation, so great a mind to laugh that he was like to burst and when Gianni spat, he said under his breath "[Would it were] thy teeth!"

The lady, having thrice conjured the phantom on this wise, returned to bed with her husband, whilst Federigo, who had not supped, looking to sup with her, and had right well apprehended the words of the conjuration, betook himself to the garden and finding the capons and wine and eggs at the foot of the great peach-tree, carried them off to his house and there supped at his ease; and after, when he next foregathered with the lady, he had a hearty laugh with her anent the conjuration aforesaid. Some say indeed that the lady had actually turned the ass's skull towards Fiesole, but that a husbandman, passing through the vineyard, had given it a blow with a stick and caused it spin round and it had become turned towards Florence, wherefore Federigo, thinking himself summoned, had come thither, and that the lady had made the conjuration on this wise: "Phantom, phantom, get thee gone in God's name; for it was not I turned the ass's head; but another it was, God put him to shame! and I am here with my Gianni in bed;" whereupon he went away and abode with supper or lodging.



THE COUNSEL OF SOLOMON

Two young men seek counsel of Solomon, one how he may be loved and the other how he may amend his froward wife, and in answer he biddeth the one love and the other get him to Goosebridge.

YOU must know that, the high renown of Solomon's miraculous wisdom being bruited abroad well nigh throughout the whole world, no less than the liberality with which he dispensed it unto whoso would fain be certified thereof by experience, there flocked many to him from divers parts of the world for counsel in their straightest and most urgent occasions. Amongst others who thus resorted to him was a young man, Melisso by name, a gentleman of noble birth and great wealth, who set out from the city of Lajazzo, whence he was and where he dwelt; and as he journeyed towards Jerusalem, it chanced that, coming forth of Antioch, he rode for some distance with a young man called Giosefo, who held the same course as himself. As the custom is of wayfarers, he entered into discourse with him and having learned from him what and whence he was, he asked him whither he went and upon what occasion; to which Giosefo replied that he was on his way to Solomon, to have counsel of him what course he should take with a wife he had, the most froward and perverse woman alive, whom neither with prayers nor with blandishments nor on any other wise could he avail to correct of her waywardness. Then he in his turn questioned Melisso whence he was and whither he went and on what errand, and he answered, "I am of Lajazzo, and like as thou hast a grievance, even so have I one; I am young and rich and spend my substance in keeping open house and entertaining my fellow-townsmen, and yet, strange to say, I cannot for all that find one who wisheth me well; wherefore I go whither thou goest, to have counsel how I may win to be beloved. Accordingly, they joined company and journeyed till they came to Jerusalem, where, by the introduction of one of Solomon's barons, they were admitted to the presence of

the king, to whom Melisso briefly set forth his occasion. Solomon answered him, "Love;" and this said, Melisso was straightway put forth and Giosefo told that for which he was there. Solomon made him no other answer than "Get thee to Goosebridge;" which said, Giosefo was on like wise removed, without delay, from the king's presence and finding Melisso awaiting him without, told him that which he had had for answer. Thereupon, pondering Solomon's words and availing to apprehend therefrom neither significance nor profit whatsoever for their occasions, they set out to return home, as deeming themselves flouted. After journeying for some days, they came to a river, over which was a fine bridge, and a caravan of pack-mules and sumpter-horses being in act to pass, it behooved them tarry till such time as these should be crossed over. Presently, the beasts having well nigh all crossed, it chanced that one of the mules took umbrage, as oftentimes we see them do, and would by no means pass on; whereupon a muleteer, taking a stick, began to beat it at first moderately enough to make it go on; but the mule shied now to this and now to that side of the road and whiles turned back altogether, but would on no wise pass on; whereupon the man, incensed beyond measure, fell to dealing it with the stick the heaviest blows in the world, now on the head, now on the flanks and anon on the crupper; but all to no purpose.

Melisso and Giosefo stood watching this and said often to the muleteer, "Alack, wretch that thou art, what dost thou? Wilt thou kill the beast? Why studieth thou not to manage him by fair means and gentle dealing? He will come quicker than for cudgeling him as thou dost." To which the man answered, "You know your horses and I know my mule; leave me do with him." So saying, he fell again to cudgeling him and belabored him to such purpose on one side and the other, that the mule passed on and the muleteer won the bout. Then, the two young men being now about to depart, Giosefo asked a poor man, who sat at the bridge-head, how the place was called, and he answered, "Sir, this is called Goosebridge." When Giosefo heard this, he straightway called to mind Solomon's words and said to Melisso, "Marry, I tell thee, comrade, that the

counsel given me by Solomon may well prove good and true, for I perceive very plainly that I knew not how to beat my wife; but this muleteer hath shown me what I have to do."

Accordingly, they fared on and came, after some days, to Antioch, where Giosefo kept Melisso with him, that he might rest himself a day or two, and being scurvily enough received of his wife, he bade her prepare supper according as Melisso should ordain; whereof the latter, seeing that it was his friend's pleasure, acquitted himself in a few words. The lady, as her usance had been in the past, did not as Melisso had ordained, but well nigh altogether the contrary; which Giosefo seeing, he was vexed and said, "Was it not told thee on what thou shouldst prepare the supper?" The lady, turning round haughtily, answered, "What meaneth this? Good lack, why dost thou not sup, an thou have a mind to sup? An if it were told me otherwise, it seemed good to me to do thus. If it please thee, so be it; if not, leave it be." Melisso marveled at the lady's answer and blamed her exceedingly; whilst Giosefo, hearing this, said, "Wife, thou art still what thou wast wont to be; but, trust me, I will make thee change thy fashion." Then turning to Melisso, "Friend," said he, "we shall soon see what manner of counsel was Solomon's; but I prithee let it not irk thee to stand to see it and hold that which I shall do for a sport. And that thou mayst not hinder me, bethink thee of the answer the muleteer made us, when we pitied his mule." Quoth Melisso, "I am in thy house, where I purpose not to depart from thy good pleasure."

Giosefo then took a round stick, made of a young oak, and repaired to a chamber, whither the lady, having arisen from table for despite, had betaken herself, grumbling; then, laying hold of her by the hair, he threw her down at his feet and proceeded to give her a sore beating with the stick. The lady at first cried out and after fell to threats; but, seeing that Giosefo for all that stinted not and being by this time all bruised, she began to cry him mercy for God's sake and besought him not to kill her, declaring that she would never more depart from his pleasure. Nevertheless, he held not his hand; nay, he continued to baste her more furiously

than ever on all her seams, belaboring her amain now on the ribs, now on the haunches and now about the shoulders, nor stinted till he was weary and there was not a place left unbruised on the good lady's back. This done, he returned to his friend and said to him, "To-morrow we shall see what will be the issue of the counsel to go to Goosebridge." Then, after he had rested awhile and they had washed their hands, he supped with Melisso and in due season they betook themselves to bed.

Meanwhile the wretched lady arose with great pain from the ground and casting herself on the bed, there rested as best she might till the morning, when she arose betimes and let ask Giosefo what he would have dressed for dinner. The latter, making merry over this with Melisso, appointed it in due course, and after, whenas it was time, returning, they found everything excellently well done and in accordance with the ordinance given; wherefore they mightily commended the counsel at first so ill apprehended of them. After some days, Melisso took leave of Giosefo and returning to his own house, told one, who was a man of understanding, the answer he had had from Solomon; whereupon quoth the other, "He could have given thee no truer nor better counsel. Thou knowest thou lovest no one, and the honors and services thou renderest others, thou dost not for love that thou bearest them, but for pomp and ostentation. Love, then, as Solomon bade thee, and thou shalt be loved." On this wise, then, was the froward wife corrected and the young man, loving, was beloved.



THE STORY OF A STRING AND A TOE

A man waxeth jealous of his wife, who bindeth a piece of packthread to her great toe anights, so she may have notice of her lover's coming. One night her husband becometh aware of this device and what while he pursueth the lover, the lady putteth another woman to bed in her room. This latter the husband beateth and cutteth off her hair, then fetcheth his wife's brothers, who, finding his story [seemingly] untrue, give him hard words.

THERE was once in our city a very rich merchant called Arriguccio Berlinghieri, who, foolishly thinking, as merchants yet do every day, to ennoble himself by marriage, took to wife a young gentlewoman ill sorting with himself, by name Madam Sismonda, who, for that he, merchant-like, was much abroad and sojourned little with her, fell in love with a young man called Ruberto, who had long courted her, and clapped up a lover's privacy with him. Using belike overlittle discretion in her dealings with her lover, for that they were supremely delightsome to her, it chanced that, whether Arriguccio scented aught of the matter or how else soever it happened, the latter became the most jealous man alive and leaving be his going about and all his other concerns, applied himself well nigh altogether to the keeping good watch over his wife; nor would he ever fall asleep, except he first felt her come into the bed; by reason whereof the lady suffered the utmost chagrin, for that on no wise might she avail to be with her Ruberto.

However, after pondering many devices for finding a means to foregather with him and being to boot continually solicited thereof by him, it presently occurred to her to do on this wise; to wit, having many a time observed that Arriguccio tarried long to fall asleep, but after slept very soundly, she determined to cause Ruberto come about midnight to the door of the house and to go open to him and abide with him what while her husband slept fast. And that she might know when he should be come, she bethought

herself to hang a twine out of the window of her bedchamber, which looked upon the street, on such wise that none might perceive it, one end whereof should well nigh reach the ground, whilst she carried the other end along the floor of the room to the bed and hid it under the clothes, meaning to make it fast to her great toe, whenas she should be abed. Accordingly, she sent to acquaint Ruberto with this and charged him, when he came, to pull the twine, whereupon, if her husband slept, she would let it go and come to open to him; but, if he slept not, she would hold it fast and draw it to herself, so he should not wait. The device pleased Ruberto and going thither frequently, he was whiles able to foregather with her and whiles not.

On this wise they continued to do till, one night, the lady being asleep, it chanced that her husband stretched out his foot in bed and felt the twine, whereupon he put his hand to it and finding it made fast to his wife's toe, said in himself, "This should be some trick;" and presently perceiving that the twine led out of the window, he held it for certain. Accordingly, he cut it softly from the lady's toe and making it fast to his own, abode on the watch to see what this might mean. He had not waited long before up came Ruberto and pulled the twine, as of his wont; whereupon Arriguccio started up; but, he not having made the twine well fast to his toe and Ruberto pulling hard, it came loose in the latter's hand, whereby he understood that he was to wait and did so. As for Arriguccio, he arose in haste and taking his arms, ran to the door, to see who this might be and do him a mischief, for, albeit a merchant, he was a stout fellow and a strong. When he came to the door, he opened it not softly as the lady was used to do, which when Ruberto, who was await, observed, he guessed how the case stood, to wit, that it was Arriguccio who opened the door, and accordingly made off in haste and the other after him. At last, having fled a great way and Arriguccio stinting not from following him, Ruberto, being also armed, drew his sword and turned upon his pursuer, whereupon they fell to blows, the one attacking and the other defending himself.

Meanwhile, the lady, awaking, as Arriguccio opened the chamber-door, and finding the twine cut from her toe, knew

incontinent that her device was discovered, whereupon, perceiving that her husband had run after her lover, she arose in haste and foreseeing what might happen, called her maid, who knew all, and conjured her to such purpose that she prevailed with her to take her own place in the bed, beseeching her patiently to endure, without discovering herself, whatsoever buffets Arriguccio might deal her, for that she would requite her therefor on such wise that she should have no cause to complain; after which she did out the light that burnt in the chamber and going forth thereof, hid herself in another part of the house and there began to await what should betide.

Meanwhile, the people of the quarter, aroused by the noise of the affray between Arriguccio and Ruberto, arose and fell a-railing at them; whereupon the husband, fearing to be known, let the youth go, without having availed to learn who he was or to do him any hurt, and returned to his house, full of rage and despite. There, coming into the chamber, he cried out angrily, saying, "Where art thou, vile woman? Thou hast done out the light, so I may not find thee; but thou art mistaken." Then, coming to the bedside, he seized upon the maid, thinking to take his wife, and laid on to her so lustily with cuffs and kicks, as long as he could wag his hands and feet, that he bruised all her face, ending by cutting off her hair, still giving her the while the hardest words that were ever said to worthless woman. The maid wept sore, as indeed she had good cause to do, and albeit she said whiles, "Alas, mercy for God's sake!" and "Oh, no more!" her voice was so broken with sobs and Arriguccio was so hindered with his rage that he never discerned it to be that of another woman than his wife.

Having, then, as we have said, beaten her to good purpose and cut off her hair, he said to her, "Wicked woman that thou art, I mean not to touch thee otherwise, but shall now go fetch thy brothers and acquaint them with thy fine doings and after bid them come for thee and deal with thee as they shall deem may do them honor and carry thee away; for assuredly in this house thou shalt abide no longer." So saying, he departed the chamber and locking the door

from without, went away all alone. As soon as Madam Sismonda, who had heard all, was certified of her husband's departure, she opened the door and rekindling the light, found her maid all bruised and weeping sore; whereupon she comforted her as best she might and carried her back to her chamber, where she after caused privily tend her and care for her and so rewarded her of Arriguccio's own monies that she avouched herself content. No sooner had she done this than she hastened to make the bed in her own chamber and all reestablished it and set it in such order as if none had lain there that night; after which she dressed and tired herself, as if she had not yet gone to bed; then, lighting a lamp, she took her clothes and seated herself at the stair-head, where she proceeded to sew and await the issue of the affair.

Meanwhile Arriguccio betook himself in all haste to the house of his wife's brothers and there knocked so long and so loudly that he was heard and it was opened to him. The lady's three brothers and her mother, hearing that it was Arriguccio, rose all and letting kindle lights, came to him and asked what he went seeking at that hour and alone. Whereupon, beginning from the twine he had found tied to his wife's toe, he recounted to them all that he had discovered and done, and to give them entire proof of the truth of his story, he put into their hands the hair he thought to have cut from his wife's head, ending by requiring them to come for her and do with her that which they should judge pertinent to their honor, for that he meant to keep her no longer in his house. The lady's brothers, hearing this and holding it for certain, were sore incensed against her and letting kindle torches, set out to accompany Arriguccio to his house, meaning to do her a mischief; which their mother seeing, she followed after them, weeping and entreating now the one, now the other not to be in such haste to believe these things of their sister, without seeing or knowing more of the matter, for that her husband might have been angered with her for some other cause and have maltreated her and might now allege this in his own excuse, adding that she marveled exceedingly how this [whereof he accused her], could have happened, for that she knew her

daughter well, as having reared her from a little child, with many other words to the like purpose.

When they came to Arriguccio's house, they entered and proceeded to mount the stair, whereupon Madam Sismonda, hearing them come, said, "Who is there?" To which one of her brothers answered, "Thou shalt soon know who it is, vile woman that thou art!" "God aid us!" cried she. "What meaneth this?" Then, rising to her feet, "Brothers mine," quoth she, "you are welcome; but what go you all three seeking at this hour?" The brothers,—seeing her seated sewing, with no sign of beating on her face, whereas Arriguccio avouched that he had beaten her to a mummy,—began to marvel and curbing the violence of their anger, demanded of her how that had been whereof Arriguccio accused her, threatening her sore, and she told them not all. Quoth she, "I know not what you would have me say nor of what Arriguccio can have complained to you of me." Arriguccio, seeing her thus, eyed her as if he had lost his wits, remembering that he had dealt her belike a thousand buffets on the face and scratched her and done her all the ill in the world, and now he beheld her as if nothing of all this had been.

Her brothers told her briefly what they had heard from Arriguccio, twine and beating and all, whereupon she turned to him and said, "Alack, husband mine, what is this I hear? Why wilt thou make me pass, to thine own great shame, for an ill woman, whereas I am none, and thyself for a cruel and wicked man, which thou art not? When wast thou in this house to-night till now, let alone with me? When didst thou beat me? For my part I have no remembrance of it." "How, vile woman that thou art!" cried he. "Did we not go to bed together here? Did I not return hither, after running after thy lover? Did I not deal thee a thousand buffets and cut off thy hair?" "Thou wentest not to bed in this house to-night," replied Sismonda. "But let that pass, for I can give no proof thereof other than mine own true words, and let us come to that which thou sayest, to wit, that thou didst beat me and cut off my hair. Me thou hast never beaten, and do all who are here and thou thyself take note of me, if I have any mark of beating in

any part of my person. Indeed, I should not counsel thee make so bold as to lay a hand on me, for, by Christ His Cross, I would mar thy face for thee! Neither didst thou cut off my hair, for aught that I felt or saw; but haply thou didst it on such wise that I perceived it not; let me see if I have it shorn or no." Then, putting off her veil from her head, she showed that she had her hair unshorn and whole.

Her mother and brothers, seeing and hearing all this, turned upon her husband and said to him, "What meanest thou, Arriguccio? This is not that so far which thou camest to tell us thou hadst done, and we know not how thou wilt make good the rest." Arriguccio stood as one in a trance and would have spoken; but, seeing that it was not as he thought he could show, he dared say nothing; whereupon the lady, turning to her brothers, said to them, "Brothers mine, I see he hath gone seeking to have me do what I have never yet chosen to do, to wit, that I should acquaint you with his lewdness and his vile fashions, and I will do it. I firmly believe that this he hath told you hath verily befallen him and that he hath done as he saith; and you shall hear how. This worthy man, to whom in an ill hour for me you gave me to wife, who calleth himself a merchant and would be thought a man of credit, this fellow, forsooth, who should be more temperate than a monk and chaster than a maid, there be few nights but he goeth fuddling himself about the taverns, foregathering now with this lewd woman and now with that and keeping me waiting for him, on such wise as you find me, half the night and whiles even till morning. I doubt not but that, having well drunken, he went to bed with some trull of his and waking, found the twine on her foot and after did all these his fine feats whereof he telleth, winding up by returning to her and beating her and cutting off her hair; and not being yet well come to himself, he fancied (and I doubt not yet fancieth) that he did all this to me; and if you look him well in the face, you will see he is yet half fuddled. Algates, whatsoever he may have said of me, I will not have you take it to yourselves except as a drunken man's talk, and since I forgive him, do you also pardon him."

Her mother, hearing this, began to make an outcry and say, "By Christ His Cross, daughter mine, it shall not pass thus! Nay, he should rather be slain for a thankless, ill-conditioned dog, who was never worthy to have a girl of thy fashion to wife. Marry, a fine thing, forsooth! He could have used thee no worse, had he picked thee up out of the dirt! Devil take him if thou shalt abide at the mercy of the spite of a paltry little merchant of asses' dung! They come to us out of their pigstyes in the country, clad in homespun frieze, with their bag-breeches and pen in arse, and as soon as they have gotten a leash of groats, they must e'en have the daughters of gentlemen and right ladies to wife and bear arms and say, 'I am of such a family' and 'Those of my house did thus and thus.' Would God my sons had followed my counsel in the matter, for that they might have stablished thee so worshipfully in the family of the Counts Guidi, with a crust of bread to thy dowry! But they must needs give thee to this fine jewel of a fellow, who, whereas thou art the best girl in Florence and the modestest, is not ashamed to knock us up in the middle of the night, to tell us that thou art a strumpet, as if we knew thee not. But, by God His faith, an they would be ruled by me, he should get such a trouncing therefor that he should stink for it!" Then, turning to the lady's brothers, "My sons," said she, "I told you this could not be. Have you heard how your fine brother-in-law here entreateth your sister? Four-farthing huckster that he is! Were I in your shoes, he having said what he hath of her and doing that which he doeth, I would never hold myself content nor appeased till I had rid the earth of him; and were I a man, as I am a woman, I would trouble none other than myself to dispatch his business. Confound him for a sorry drunken beast, that hath no shame!"

The young men, seeing and hearing all this, turned upon Arriguccio and gave him the soundest rating ever losel got; and ultimately they said to him, "We pardon thee this as to a drunken man; but, as thou tenderest thy life, look henceforward we hear no more news of this kind, for, if aught of the like come ever again to our ears, we will pray thee at once for this and for that." So saying, they went

their ways leaving Arriguccio all aghast, as it were he had taken leave of his wits, unknowing in himself whether that which he had done had really been or whether he had dreamed it; wherefore he made no more words thereof, but left his wife in peace. Thus the lady, by her ready wit, not only escaped the imminent peril [that threatened her], but opened herself a way to do her every pleasure in time to come, without evermore having any fear of her husband.

CIMON AND IPHIGENIA

Cimon, losing, waxeth wiser and carryeth off to sea Iphigenia his mistress. Being cast into prison at Rhodes, he is delivered thence by Lysimachus and in concert with him carryeth off Iphigenia and Cassandra on their wedding-day, with whom the main flee into Crete, where the two ladies become their wives and whence they are presently all four recalled home.

THERE was, in the island of Cyprus,⁷ (as we have read aforetime in the ancient histories of the Cypriots,) a very noble gentleman, by name Aristippus, who was rich beyond any other of the country in all temporal things and might have held himself the happiest man alive, had not Fortune made him woeful in one only thing, to-wit, that amongst his other children he had a son who overpassed all the other youths of his age in stature and goodliness of body, but was a hopeless dullard and well nigh an idiot. His true name was Galesus, but for that neither by toil of teacher nor blandishment nor beating of his father nor study nor endeavor of whatsoever other had it been found possible to put into his head any inkling of letters or good breeding and that he had a rough voice and an uncouth and manners more befitting a beast than a man, he was of well nigh all by way of mockery called Cimon, which in their tongue signified as much as brute beast in ours. His father brooked his wasted life with the most grievous concern and having presently given over all hope of him, he bade him begone to his country house and there abide with his husbandmen, so he might not still have before him the cause of his chagrin; the which was very agreeable to Cimon, for that the manners and usages of clowns and churls were much more to his liking than those of the townstfolk.

Cimon, then, betaking himself to the country and there employing himself in the things that pertained thereto, it chanced one day, awhile at noon, as he passed from one farm to another, with his staff on his shoulder, that he entered a very fair coppice which was in those parts and which was then all in leaf, for that it was the month of May.

Passing therethrough, he happened (even as his fortune guided him thither) upon a little mead compassed about with very high trees, in one corner whereof was a very clear and cool spring, beside which he saw a very fair damsel asleep upon the green grass, with so thin a garment upon her body that it hid well nigh nothing of her snowy flesh. She was covered only from the waist down with a very white and light coverlet; and at her feet slept on likewise two women and a man, her servants. When Cimon espied the young lady, he halted and leaning upon his staff, fell, without saying a word, to gazing most intently upon her with the utmost admiration, no otherwise than as he had never yet seen a woman's form, while in his rude breast, wherein for a thousand lessonings no least impression of civil pleasance had availed to penetrate, he felt a thought awaken which intimated to his gross and material spirit that this maiden was the fairest thing that had been ever seen of any living soul. Thence he proceeded to consider her various parts,—commending her hair, which he accounted of gold, her brow, her nose, her mouth, her throat and arms, and above all her breast, as yet but little upraised,—and grown of a sudden from a churl a judge of beauty, he ardently desired in himself to see the eyes, which, weighed down with deep sleep, she kept closed. To this end, he had it several times in mind to awaken her; but, for that she seemed to him beyond measure fairer than any of the other women aforetime seen of him, he misdoubted him she must be some goddess. Now he had wit enough to account things divine worthy of more reverence than those mundane; wherefore he forbore, waiting for her to awake of herself; and albeit the delay seemed overlong to him, yet, taken as he was with an unwonted pleasure, he knew not how to tear himself away.

It befell, then, that, after a long while, the damsel, whose name was Iphigenia, came to herself, before any of her people, and opening her eyes, saw Cimon (who, what for his fashion and uncouthness and his father's wealth and nobility, was known in a manner to every one in the country) standing before her, leant on his staff, marveled exceedingly and said, "Cimon, what goest thou seeking in this wood at this

hour?" He made her no answer, but, seeing her eyes open, began to look steadfastly upon them, himseeming there proceeded thence a sweetness which fulfilled him with a pleasure such as he had never before felt. The young lady, seeing this, began to misdoubt her lest his so fixed looking upon her soul should move his rusticity to somewhat that might turn to her shame; wherefore, calling her women, she rose up, saying, "Cimon, abide with God." To which he replied, "I will begone with thee;" and albeit the young lady, who was still in fear of him, would have declined his company, she could not win to rid herself of him till he had accompanied her to her own house.

Thence he repaired to his father's house [in the city], and declared to him that he would on no wise consent to return to the country; the which was irksome enough to Aristippus and his kinsfolk; nevertheless they let him be, awaiting to see what might be the cause of his change of mind. Love's arrow having, then, through Iphigenia's beauty, penetrated into Cimon's heart, whereinto no teaching had ever availed to win an entrance, in a very brief time, proceeding from one idea to another, he made his father marvel and all his kinsfolk and every other that knew him. In the first place he besought his father that he would cause him go bedecked with clothes and every other thing, even as his brothers, the which Aristippus right gladly did. Then, consorting with young men of condition and learning the fashions and carriage that behooved unto gentlemen and especially unto lovers, he first, to the utmost wonderment of every one, in a very brief space of time, not only learned the first [elements of] letters, but became very eminent among the students of philosophy, and after (the love which he bore Iphigenia being the cause of all this) he not only reduced his rude and rustical manner of speech to seemliness and civility, but became a past master of song and sound and exceeding expert and doughty in riding and martial exercises, both by land and by sea. In short, not to go recounting every particular of his merits, the fourth year was not accomplished from the day of his first falling in love, ere he was grown the sprightliest and most accomplished gentleman of all the young men in the island of Cyprus, ay, and the best en-

dowed with every particular excellence. What, then, charming ladies, shall we say of Cimon? Certes, none other thing than that the lofty virtues implanted by heaven in his generous soul had been bounden with exceeding strong bonds of jealous Fortune and shut in some straitest corner of his heart, all which bonds Love, as a mightier than Fortune, broke and burst in sunder and in its quality of awakener and quickener of drowsed and sluggish wits, urged forth into broad daylight the virtues aforesaid, which had till then been overdarkened with a barbarous obscurity, thus manifestly discovering from how mean a room it can avail to uplift those souls that are subject unto it and to what an eminence it can conduct them with its beams.

Although Cimon, loving Iphigenia as he did, might exceed in certain things, as young men in love very often do, nevertheless Aristippus, considering that Love had turned him from a dunce into a man, not only patiently bore with the extravagances into which it might whiles lead him, but encouraged him to ensue its every pleasure. But Cimon (who refused to be called Galesus, remembering that Iphigenia had called him by the former name,) seeking to put an honorable term to his desire, once and again caused essay Cipseus, Iphigenia's father, so he should give him his daughter to wife; but Cipseus still answered that he had promised her to Pasimondas, a young nobleman of Rhodes, to whom he had no mind to fail of his word. The time coming for the convenanted nuptials of Iphigenia and the bridegroom having sent for her, Cimon said in himself, "Now, O Iphigenia, is the time to prove how much thou art beloved of me. By thee am I become a man and so I may but have thee, I doubt not to become more glorious than any god; and for certain I will have thee or die."

Accordingly having secretly recruited certain young noblemen who were his friends and let privily equip a ship with everything apt for naval battle, he put out to sea and awaited the vessel wherein Iphigenia was to be transported to her husband in Rhodes. The bride, after much honor done of her father to the bridegroom's friends, took ship with the latter, who turned their prow toward Rhodes and departed. On the following day, Cimon, who slept not,

came out upon them with his ship and cried out, in a loud voice, from the prow, to those who were on board Iphigenia's vessel, saying, "Stay, strike your sails or look to be beaten and sunken in the sea." Cimon's adversaries had gotten up their arms on deck and made ready to defend themselves; whereupon he, after speaking the words aforesaid, took a grappling-iron and casting it upon the poop of the Rhodians, who were making off at the top of their speed, made it fast by main force to the prow of his own ship. Then, bold as a lion, he leapt on board their ship, without waiting for any to follow him, as if he held them all for nought, and Love spurring him, he fell upon his enemies with marvelous might, cutlass in hand, striking now this one and now that and hewing them down like sheep.

The Rhodians, seeing this, cast down their arms and all as with one voice confessed themselves prisoners; whereupon quoth Cimon to them, "Young men, it was neither lust of rapine nor hate that I had against you made me depart Cyprus to assail you, arms in hand, in mid sea. That which moved me thereunto was the desire of a thing which to have gotten is a very grave matter to me and to you a very light one to yield me in peace; it is, to-wit, Iphigenia, whom I love over all else and whom, availing not to have of her father on friendly and peaceable wise, Love hath constrained me to win from you as an enemy and by force of arms. Wherefore I mean to be to her that which your friend Pasimondas should have been. Give her to me, then, and begone and God's grace go with you."

The Rhodians, more by force constrained than of free-will, surrendered Iphigenia, weeping, to Cimon, who, seeing her in tears, said to her, "Noble lady, be not disconsolate; I am thy Cimon, who by long love have far better deserved to have thee than Pasimondas by plighted faith." Thereupon he caused carry her aboard his own ship and returning to his companions, let the Rhodians go, without touching aught else of theirs. Then, glad beyond any man alive to have gotten so dear a prey, after devoting some time to comforting the weeping lady, he took counsel with his comrades not to return to Cyprus at that present; wherefore, of one accord, they turned the ship's head toward Crete,

where well nigh every one, and especially Cimon, had kinsfolk, old and new, and friends in plenty and where they doubted not to be in safety with Iphigenia. But Fortune the unstable, which had cheerfully enough vouchsafed unto Cimon the acquisition of the lady, suddenly changed the inexpressible joyance of the enamored youth into sad and bitter mourning; for it was not four fulltold hours since he had left the Rhodians when the night (which Cimon looked to be more delightsome than any he had ever known) came on and with it a very troublous and tempestous shift of weather, which filled all the sky with clouds and the sea with ravening winds, by reason whereof none could see what to do or whither to steer, nor could any even keep the deck to do any office.

How sore concerned was Cimon for this it needeth not to ask; himseemed the gods had vouchsafed him his desire but to make death the more grievous to him, whereof, without that, he had before recked little. His comrades lamented on like wise, but Iphigenia bewailed herself over all, weeping sore and fearing every stroke of the waves; and in her chagrin she bitterly cursed Cimon's love and blamed his presumption, avouching that the tempest had risen for none other thing but that the gods chose not that he, who would fain against their will have her to wife, should avail to enjoy his presumptuous desire, but, seeing her first die, should after himself perish miserably.

Amidst such lamentations and others yet more grievous, the wind waxing hourly fiercer and the seamen knowing not what to do, they came, without witting whither they went or availing to change their course, near to the island of Rhodes, and unknowing that it was Rhodes, they used their every endeavor to get to land thereon, an it were possible, for the saving of their lives. In this Fortune was favorable to them and brought them into a little bight of the sea, where the Rhodians whom Cimon had let go had a little before arrived with their ship; nor did they perceive that they had struck the island of Rhodes till the dawn broke and made the sky somewhat clearer, when they found themselves maybe a bowshot distant from the ship left of them the day before. At this Cimon was beyond measure cha-

grined and fearing lest that should betide them which did in every deed ensue, bade use every endeavor to issue thence and let Fortune after carry them whither it should please her, for that they could be nowhere in worse case than there. Accordingly, they made the utmost efforts to put to sea, but in vain; for the wind blew so mightily against them that not only could they not avail to issue from the little harbor, but, whether they would or no, it drove them ashore.

No sooner were they come thither than they were recognized by the Rhodian sailors, who had landed from their ship, and one of them ran nimbly to a village hard by, whither the young Rhodian gentlemen had betaken themselves, and told the latter that, as luck would have it, Cimon and Iphigenia were come thither aboard their ship, driven, like themselves, by stress of weather. They, hearing this, were greatly rejoiced and repairing in all haste to the seashore, with a number of the villagers, took Cimon, together with Iphigenia, and all his company; who had now landed and taken counsel together to flee into some neighboring wood, and carried them to the village. The news coming to Pasimondas, he made his complaint to the senate of the island and according as he had ordered it with them, Lysimachus, in whom the chief magistracy of the Rhodians was for that year vested, coming thither from the city with a great company of men-at-arms, haled Cimon and all his men to prison. On such wise did the wretched and lovelorn Cimon lose his Iphigenia, scantwhile before won of him, without having taken of her more than a kiss or two; whilst she herself was received by many noble ladies of Rhodes and comforted as well for the chagrin had of her seizure as for the fatigue suffered by reason of the troubled sea; and with them she abode against the day appointed for her nuptials.

As for Cimon and his companions, their lives were granted them, in consideration of the liberty given by them to the young Rhodians the day before,—albeit Pasimondas used his utmost endeavor to procure them to be put to death,—and they were condemned to perpetual prison, wherein, as may well be believed, they abode woebegone and without

hope of any relief. However, whilst Pasimondas, as most he might, hastened the preparations for his coming nuptials, Fortune, as if repenting her of the sudden injury done to Cimon, brought about a new circumstance for his deliverance, the which was on this wise. Pasimondas had a brother called Ormisdas, less in years, but not in merit, than himself, who had been long in treaty for the hand of a fair and noble damsel of the city, by name Cassandra, whom Lysimachus ardently loved, and the match had sundry times been broken off by divers untoward accidents. Now Pasimondas, being about to celebrate his own nuptials with the utmost splendor, bethought himself that it were excellently well done if he could procure Ormisdas likewise to take wife on the same occasion, not to resort afresh to expense and festival making. Accordingly, he took up again the parleys with Cassandra's parents and brought them to a successful issue, wherefore he and his brother agreed, in concert with them, that Ormisdas should take Cassandra to wife on the same day whenas himself took Iphigenia.

Lysimachus hearing this, it was beyond measure displeasing to him, for that he saw himself bereaved of the hope which he cherished, that, an Ormisdas took her not, he should certainly have her. However, like a wise man, he kept his chagrin hidden and fell to considering on what wise he might avail to hinder this having effect, but could see no way possible save the carrying her off. This seemed easy for him to compass for the office which he held, but he accounted the deed far more dishonorable than if had not held the office in question. Ultimately, however, after long deliberation, honor gave place to love and he determined, come what might of it, to carry off Cassandra. Then, bethinking himself of the company he must have and the course he must hold to do this, he remembered him of Cimon, whom he had in prison with his comrades, and concluded that he might have no better or trustier companion than Cimon, in this affair.

Accordingly, that same night he had him privily into his chamber and proceeded to bespeak him on this wise: "Cimon, like as the gods are very excellent and bountiful givers of things to men, even so are they most sagacious provers of

their virtues, and those whom they find resolute and constant under all circumstances, they hold deserving, as the most worthy, of the highest recompenses. They have been minded to have more certain proof of thy worth than could be shown by thee within the limits of thy father's house, whom I know to be abundantly endowed with riches; wherefore, first, with the poignant instigations of love they brought thee from a senseless animal to be a man, and after with foul fortune and at present with prison dour, they would fain try if thy spirit change not from that which it was, whenas thou wast scantwhile glad of the gotten prize. If that be the same as it was erst, they never yet vouchsafed thee aught so glad-some as that which they are presently prepared to bestow on thee and which, so thou mayst recover thy wonted powers and resume thy whilom spirit, I purpose to discover to thee.

"Pasimondas, rejoicing in thy misadventure and a diligent promoter of thy death, bestirreth himself as most he may to celebrate his nuptials with thine Iphigenia, so therein he may enjoy the prize which Fortune first blithely conceded thee and after, growing troubled, took from thee of a sudden. How much this must grieve thee, an thou love as I believe, I know by myself, to whom Ormisdas his brother prepareth in one same day to do a like injury in the person of Cassandra, whom I love over all else. To escape so great an upright and annoy of fortune, I see no way left open of her to us, save the valor of our souls and the might of our right hands, wherein it behooveth us take our swords and make us a way to the carrying off of our two mistresses, thee for the second and me for the first time. If, then, it be dear to thee to have again—I will not say thy liberty, whereof methinketh thou reckest little without thy lady, but—thy mistress, the gods have put her in thy hands, an thou be willing to second me in my emprise."

All Cimon's lost spirit was requickenened in him by these words and he replied, without overmuch consideration, "Lysimachus, thou canst have no stouter or trustier comrade than myself in such an enterprise, an that be to ensue thereof for me which thou avouchest; wherefore do thou command me that which thou deemest should be done of me, and thou shalt find thyself wonder-puissantly seconded."

Then said Lysimachus, "On the third day from this new-married wives will for the first time enter their husbands' houses, whereinto thou with thy companions armed and I with certain of my friends, in whom I put great trust, will make our way toward nightfall and snatching up our mistresses out of the midst of the guests, will carry them off to a ship, which I have caused secretly equip, slaying whosoever shall presume to offer opposition." The device pleased Cimon and he abode quiet in prison until the appointed time.

The wedding-day being come, great and magnificent was the pomp of the festival and every part of the two brothers' house was full of mirth and merry-making; whereupon Lysimachus, having made ready everything needful, divided Cimon and his companions, together with his own friends, all armed under their clothes, into three parties and having first kindled them to his purpose with many words, secretly dispatched one party to the harbor, so none might hinder their going aboard the ship, whenas need should be. Then, coming with the other twain, whenas it seemed to him time, to Pasimondas his house, he left one party of them at the door, so as none might shut them up therewithin or forbid them the issue, and with Cimon and the rest went up by the stairs. Coming to the saloon where the new-wedded brides were seated orderly at meat with many other ladies, they rushed in upon them and overthrowing the tables, took each his mistress and putting them in the hands of their comrades, bade straightway carry them to the ship that was in waiting. The brides fell a-weeping and shrieking, as did likewise the other ladies and the servants, and the whole house was of a sudden full of clamor and lamentation.

Cimon and Lysimachus and their companions, drawing their swords, made for the stairs, without any opposition, all giving way to them, and as they descended Pasimondas presented himself before them, with a great cudgel in his hand, being drawn thither by the outcry; but Cimon dealt him a swashing blow on the head and cleaving it sheer in sunder, laid him dead at his feet. The wretched Ormisdas, running to his brother's aid, was on like wise slain by one of Cimon's strokes, and divers others who sought to draw nigh

them were in like manner wounded and beaten off by the companions of the latter and Lysimachus, who, leaving the house full of blood and clamor and weeping and woe, drew together and made their way to the ship with their prizes, unhindered of any. Here they embarked with their mistresses and all their companions, the shore being now full of armed folk come to the rescue of the ladies, and thrusting the oars into the water, made off, rejoicing, about their business. Coming presently to Crete, they were there joyfully received by many, both friends and kinsfolk, and espousing their mistresses with great pomp, gave themselves up to the glad enjoyment of their purchase. Loud and long were the clamors and differences in Cyprus and in Rhodes by reason of their doings; but, ultimately, their friends and kinsfolk, interposing in one and the other place, found means so to adjust matters that after some exile, Cimon joyfully returned to Cyprus with Iphigenia, whilst Lysimachus on like wise returned to Rhodes with Cassandra, and each lived long and happily with his mistress in his own country.



THE HOSPITALITY OF TORELLO D'ISTRIA

Saladin, in the disguise of a merchant, is honorably entertained by Messer Torello d'Istria, who, presently undertaking the [third] crusade, appointeth his wife a term for her marrying again. He is taken [by the Saracens] and cometh, by his skill in training hawks, under the notice of the Soldan, who knoweth him again and discovering himself to him, entreateth him with the utmost honor. Then, Torello falling sick for languishment, he is by magical art transported in one night [from Alexandria] to Pavia, where, being recognized by his wife at the bridefeast held for her marrying again, he returneth with her to his own house.

ACCORDING to that which divers folk affirm, a general crusade was, in the days of the Emperor Frederick the First, undertaken by the Christians for the recovery of the Holy Land, whereof Saladin, a very noble and valiant prince, who was then Soldan of Babylon, having notice awhile beforehand, he bethought himself to seek in his own person to see the preparations of the Christian princes for the undertaking in question, so he might the better avail to provide himself. Accordingly, having ordered all his affairs in Egypt, he made a show of going a pilgrimage and set out in the disguise of a merchant, attended by two only of his chiefest and sagest officers and three serving-men. After he had visited many Christian countries, it chanced that, as they rode through Lombardy, thinking to pass beyond the mountains, they encountered, about vespers, on the road from Milan to Pavia, a gentleman of the latter place, by name Messer Torello d'Istria, who was on his way, with his servants and dogs and falcons, to sojourn at a goodly country seat he had upon the Tesino, and no sooner set eyes on Saladin and his company than he knew them for gentlemen and strangers; wherefore, the Soldan inquiring of one of his servants how far they were yet distant from Pavia and if he might win thither in time to enter the city, he suffered not the man to reply, but himself answered, "Gentlemen, you cannot reach Pavia in time to enter

therein." "Then," said Saladin, "may it please you acquaint us (for that we are strangers) where we may best lodge the night." Quoth Messer Torello, "That will I willingly do. I had it presently in mind to dispatch one of my men here to the neighborhood of Pavia for somewhat: I will send him with you and he shall bring you to a place where you may lodge conveniently enough." Then, turning to the discreetest of his men, he [privily] enjoined him what he should do and sent him with them, whilst he himself, making for his country house, let order, as best he might, a goodly supper and set the tables in the garden; which done, he posted himself at the door to await his guests.

Meanwhile, the servant, devising with the gentleman of one thing and another, led them about by certain by-roads and brought them, without their suspecting it, to his lord's residence, where, whenas Messer Torello saw them, he came to meet them afoot and said, smiling, "Gentlemen, you are very welcome." Saladin, who was very quick of apprehension, understood that the gentleman had misdoubted him they would not have accepted his invitation, had he bidden them whenas he fell in with them, and had, therefore, brought them by practice to his house, so they might not avail to refuse to pass the night with him, and accordingly, returning his greeting, he said, "Sir, an one could complain of men of courtesy, we might complain of you, for that (letting be that you have somewhat hindered us from our road) you have, without our having merited your goodwill otherwise than by a mere salutation, constrained us to accept of such noble hospitality as is this of yours." "Gentlemen," answered Messer Torello, who was a discreet and well-spoken man, "it is but a sorry hospitality that you will receive from us, regard had to that which should behoove unto you, an I may judge by that which I apprehend from your carriage and that of your companions; but in truth you could nowhere out of Pavia have found any decent place of entertainment; wherefore, let it not irk you to have gone somedeale beside your way, to have a little less unease." Meanwhile, his servants came round about the travelers and helping them to dismount, eased their horses.

Messer Torello then brought the three stranger gentlemen

to the chambers prepared for them, where he let unboot them and refresh them somewhat with very cool wines and entertained them in agreeable discourse till such time as they might sup. Saladin and his companions and servants all knew Latin, wherefore they understood very well and were understood, and it seemed to each of them that this gentleman was the most pleasant and well-mannered man they had ever seen, ay, and the best spoken. It appeared to Messer Torello, on the other hand, that they were men of magnificent fashions and much more of account than he had at first conceived, wherefore he was inwardly chagrined that he could not honor them that evening with companions and with a more considerable entertainment. But for this he bethought himself to make them amends on the morrow, and accordingly, having instructed one of his servants of that which he would have done, he despatched him to Pavia, which was very near at hand and where no gate was ever locked, to his lady, who was exceeding discreet and great-hearted. Then, carrying the gentlemen into the garden, he courteously asked them who they were, to which Saladin answered, "We are merchants from Cyprus and are bound to Paris on our occasions." "Would to God," cried Messer Torello, "that this our country produced gentlemen of such a fashion as I see Cyprus doth merchants!" In these and other discourses they abode till it was time to sup, whereupon he left it to them to honor themselves at table, and here, for an improvised supper, they were very well and orderly served; nor had they abidden long after the tables were removed, when Messer Torello, judging them to be weary, put them to sleep in very goodly beds and himself a little after in like manner betook himself to rest.

Meanwhile the servant sent to Pavia did his errand to the lady, who, with no womanly, but with a royal spirit, let call in haste a great number of the friends and servants of Messer Torello and made ready all that behooved unto a magnificent banquet. Moreover, she let bid by torchlight many of the noblest of the townfolk to the banquet and bringing out cloths and silks and furs, caused thoroughly order that which her husband had sent to bid her do. The day come, Saladin and his companions arose, whereupon

Messer Torello took horse with them and sending for his falcons, carried them to a neighboring ford and there showed them how the latter flew; then Saladin inquiring for some one who should bring him to Pavia and to the best inn, his host said, "I will be your guide, for that it behooveth me go thither." The others, believing this, were content and set out in company with him for the city, which they reached about tierce and thinking to be on their way to the best inn, were carried by Messer Torello to his own house, where a good half-hundred of the most considerable citizens were already come to receive the stranger gentlemen and were straightway about their bridles and stirrups. Saladin and his companions, seeing this, understood but too well what was forward and said, "Messer Torello, this is not what we asked of you; you have done enough for us this past night, ay, and far more than we are worth: wherefore you might now fitly suffer us fare on our way." "Gentlemen," replied Messer Torello, "for my yesternight's dealing with you I am more indebted to fortune than to you, which took you on the road at an hour when it behooved you come to my poor house; but of your this morning's visit I shall be beholden to yourselves, and with me all these gentlemen who are about you and to whom an it seem to you courteous to refuse to dine with them, you can do so, if you will."

Saladin and his companions, overcome, dismounted and being joyfully received by the assembled company, were carried to chambers which had been most sumptuously arrayed for them where, having put off their traveling gear and somewhat refreshed themselves, they repaired to the saloon, where the banquet was splendidly prepared. Water having been given to the hands, they were seated at table with the goodliest and most orderly observance and magnificently served with many viands, insomuch that, were the emperor himself come thither it had been impossible to do him more honor, and albeit Saladin and his companions were great lords used to see very great things, natheless, they were mightily wondered at this and it seemed to them of the greatest, having regard to the quality of the gentleman, whom they knew to be only a citizen and

not a lord. Dinner ended and the tables removed, they conversed awhile of divers things; then, at Messer Torello's instances, the heat being great, the gentlemen of Pavia all betook themselves to repose, whilst he himself, abiding alone with his three guests, carried them into a chamber and (that no precious thing of his should remain unseen of them) let call thither his noble lady. Accordingly, the latter, who was very fair and tall of her person, came in to them, arrayed in rich apparel and flanked by two little sons of hers, as they were two angels, and saluted them courteously. The strangers, seeing her, rose to their feet and receiving her with worship, caused her sit among them and made much of her two children. Therewithal she entered into pleasant discourse with them and presently, Messer Torello having gone out awhile, she asked them courteously whence they were and whither they went; to which they made answer even as they had done to her husband; whereupon quoth she, with a blithe air, "Then see I that my womanly advisement will be useful; wherefore I pray you, of your especial favor, refuse me not neither disdain a slight present, which I shall cause bring you, accept it, considering that women, of their little heart, give little things and regarding more the goodwill of the giver than the value of the gift." Then, letting fetch them each two gowns, one lined with silk and the other with miniver, no wise citizens' clothes nor merchants', but fit for great lords to wear, and three doublets of sendal and linen breeches to match, she said, "Take these; I have clad my lord in gowns of the like fashion, and the other things, for all they are little worth, may be acceptable to you, considering that you are far from your ladies and the length of the way you have traveled and that which is yet to travel and that merchants are proper men and nice of their persons."

The Saracens marveled and manifestly perceived that Messer Torello was minded to leave no particular of hospitality undone them; nay, seeing the magnificence of the unmerchantlike gowns, they misdoubted them they had been recognized of him. However, one of them made answer to the lady, saying, "Madam, these are very great matters and such as should not lightly be accepted, an your prayers, to

which it is impossible to say no, constrained us not thereto." This done and Messer Torello being now returned, the lady, commending them to God, took leave of them and let furnish their servants with like things such as sorted with their condition. Messer Torello with many prayers prevailed upon them to abide with him all that day; wherefore, after they had slept awhile, they donned their gowns and rode with him somedeale about the city; then, the supper-hour come, they supped magnificently with many worshipful companions and in due time betook themselves to rest. On the morrow they arose with day and found, in place of their tired hackneys three stout and good palfreys, and on like wise fresh and strong horses for their servants, which when Saladin saw, he turned to his companions and said, "I vow to God that never was there a more accomplished gentleman nor a more courteous and apprehensive than this one, and if the kings of the Christians are kings of such a fashion as this is a gentleman, the Soldan of Babylon can never hope to stand against a single one of them, not to speak of the many whom we see make ready to fall upon him." Then, knowing that it were in vain to seek to refuse this new gift, they very courteously thanked him therefore and mounted to horse.

Messer Torello, with many companions, brought them a great way without the city, till, grievous as it was to Saladin to part from him, (so much was he by this grown enamored of him,) natheless, need constraining him to press on, he presently besought him to turn back: whereupon, loath as he was to leave them, "Gentlemen," quoth he, "since it pleaseth you, I will do it; but one thing I will e'en say to you; I know not who you are nor do I ask to know more thereof than it pleaseth you to tell me; but, be you who you may, you will never make me believe that you are merchants, and so I commend you to God." Saladin having by this taken leave of all Messer Torello's companions, replied to him, saying, "Sir, we may yet chance to let you see somewhat of our merchandise, whereby we may confirm your belief; meantime, God be with you." Thereupon he departed with his followers, firmly resolved if life should endure to him and the war he looked for undo him not, to

do Messer Torello no less honor than that which he had done him, and much did he discourse with his companions of him and of his lady and all his affairs and fashions and dealings, mightily commending everything. Then, after he had, with no little fatigue, visited all the West, he took ship with his companions and returned to Alexandria, where, being now fully informed, he addressed himself to his defense. As for Messer Torello, he returned to Pavia and went long in thought who these might be, but never hit upon the truth, no, nor came near it.

The time being now come for the crusade and great preparations made everywhere, Messer Torello, notwithstanding the tears and entreaties of his wife, was altogether resolved to go thereon and having made his every provision and being about to take horse, he said to his lady, whom he loved over all, "Wife, as thou seest, I go on this crusade, as well for the honor of my body as for the health of my soul. I commend to thee our affairs and our honor, and for that I am certain of the going, but of the returning, for a thousand chances that may betide, I have no assurance, I will have thee do me a favor, to wit, that whatever befall of me, an thou have not certain news of my life, thou shalt await me a year and a month and a day, e'er thou marry again, beginning from this the day of my departure." The lady, who wept sore, answered, "Messer Torello, I know not how I shall endure the chagrin wherein you leave me by your departure; but, an my life prove stronger than my grief and aught befall you, you may live and die assured that I shall live and die the wife of Messer Torello and of his memory." "Wife," rejoined Messer Torello, "I am very certain that, inasmuch as in thee lieth, this that thou promisest me will come to pass; but thou art a young woman and fair and of high family and thy worth is great and everywhere known; wherefore I doubt not but many great and noble gentlemen will, should aught be misdoubted of me, demand thee of thy brethren and kinsfolk; from whose importunities, how much soever thou mightest wish, thou wilt not be able to defend thyself and it will behoove thee perforce comply with their wishes; and this is why I ask of thee this term and not a greater one." Quoth the lady,

"I will do what I may of that which I have told you, and should it nevertheless behoove me do otherwise, I will assuredly obey you in this that you enjoin me; but I pray God that He bring nor you nor me to such an extremity in these days." This said, she embraced him, weeping, and drawing a ring from her finger, gave it to him, saying, "An it chance that I die ere I see you again, remember me when you look upon this ring."

Torello took the ring and mounted to horse; then, bidding all his people adieu, he set out on his journey and came presently with his company to Genoa. There he embarked on board a galleon and coming in a little while to Acre, joined himself to the other army of the Christians, wherein, well nigh out of hand there began a sore sickness and mortality. During this, whether by Saladin's skill or of his good fortune, well nigh all the remnant of the Christians who had escaped alive were taken by him, without blow stricken, and divided among many cities and imprisoned. Messer Torello was one of those taken and was carried prisoner to Alexandria, where, being unknown, and fearing to make himself known, he addressed himself, of necessity constrained, to the training of hawks, of which he was a great master, and by this he came under the notice of Saladin, who took him out of prison and entertained him for his falconer. Messer Torello, who was called by the Soldan by none other name than the Christian, recognized him not nor did Saladin recognize him; nay, all his thoughts were in Pavia and he had more than once essayed to flee, but without avail: wherefore, certain Genoese coming ambassadors to Saladin, to treat for the ransom of sundry of their townsmen, and being about to depart, he bethought himself to write to his lady, giving her to know that he was alive and would return to her as quickliest he might and bidding her await him. Accordingly, he wrote letters to this effect and instantly besought one of the ambassadors, whom he knew, to cause them come to the hands of the Abbot of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, who was his uncle.

Things being at this pass with him, it befell one day that, as Saladin was devising with him of his hawks, Messer Torello chanced to smile and made a motion with his mouth,

which the former had much noted, what while he was in his house at Pavia. This brought the gentleman to his mind and looking steadfastly upon him, himseemed it was himself; wherefore, leaving the former discourse, "Harkye, Christian," said he, "what countryman art thou of the West?" "My lord," replied Torello, "I am a Lombard of a city called Pavia, a poor man and of mean condition." Saladin, hearing this, was in a manner certified of the truth of his suspicion and said joyfully in himself, "God hath vouchsafed me an opportunity of showing this man how grateful his courtesy was to me." Accordingly, without saying otherwhat, he let lay out all his apparel in a chamber and carrying him thither, said to him, "Look, Christian, if there be any among these gowns that thou hast ever seen." Torello looked and saw those which his lady had given Saladin; but, natheless, conceiving not that they could possibly be the same, he answered, "My lord, I know none of them; albeit, in good sooth, these twin do favor certain gowns wherewithal I, together with three merchants who came to my house, was invested aforetime." Thereupon Saladin, unable to contain himself farther, embraced him tenderly, saying, "You are Messer Torello d'Istria and I am one of the three merchants to whom your lady gave these gowns; and now is the time come to certify you what manner merchandise mine is, even as I told you, at my parting from you, might chance to betide." Messer Torello, hearing this, was at once rejoiced and ashamed; rejoiced to have had such a guest and ashamed for that himseemed he had entertained him but scurvily. Then said Saladin, "Messer Torello, since God hath sent you hither to me, henceforth consider that not I, but you are master here." Accordingly, after they had mightily rejoiced in each other, he clad him in royal apparel and carrying him into the presence of all his chief barons, commanded, after saying many things in praise of his worth, that he should of all who held his favor dear be honored as himself, which was thenceforward done of all, but above all of the two gentlemen who had been Saladin's companions in his house.

The sudden height of glory to which Messer Torello thus found himself advanced put his Lombardy affairs somede

out of his mind, more by token that he had good reason to hope that his letters were by this come to his uncle's hands. Now there had died and been buried in the camp, or rather in the host of the Christians, the day they were taken by Saladin, a Provençal gentleman of little account, by name Messer Torello de Dignes, by reason whereof, Messer Torello d'Istria being renowned throughout the army of his magnificence, whosoever heard say, "Messer Torello is dead," believed it of Messer Torello d'Istria, not of him of Dignes. The hazard of the capture that ensued thereupon suffered not those who had been misled to be undeceived; wherefore many Italians returned with this news, amongst whom were some who scrupled not to avouch that they had seen him dead and had been at the burial. This, coming to be known of his wife and kinsfolk, was the cause of grievous and inexpressible sorrow, not only to them, but to all who had known him. It were longsome to set forth what and how great was the grief and sorrow and lamentation of his lady; but, after having bemoaned herself some months in continual affliction, coming to sorrow less and being sought in marriage of the chiefest men in Lombardy, she began to be presently importuned by her brothers and other her kinsfolk to marry again. After having again and again refused with many tears, needs must she at the last consent perforce to do her kinsfolk's will, on condition that she should abide, without going to a husband, so long as she had promised Messer Torello.

The lady's affairs at Pavia being at this pass and there lacking maybe eight days of the term appointed for her going to her new husband, it chanced that Messer Torello espied one day in Alexandria one whom he had seen embark with the Genoese ambassadors on board the galley that was to carry them back to Genoa, and calling him, asked him what manner voyage they had had and when they had reached Genoa; whereto the other replied, "Sir, the galleon (as I heard in Crete, where I remained,) made an ill voyage; for that she drew near unto Sicily, there arose a furious northerly wind, which drove her on to the Barbary quicksands, nor was any one saved; and amongst the rest two brothers of mine perished there." Messer Torello, giving

credit to his words, which were indeed but too true, and remembering him that the term required by him of his wife ended a few days thence, concluded that nothing could be known at Pavia of his condition and held it for certain that the lady must have married again; wherefore he fell into such chagrin that he lost [sleep and] appetite and taking to his bed, determined to die. When Saladin, who loved him above all, heard of this, he came to him and having, by dint of many and urgent prayers, learned the cause of his grief and his sickness, upbraided him sore for that he had not before told it to him and after besought him to be comforted, assuring him that, if he would but take heart, he would so contrive that he should be in Pavia at the appointed term and told him how. Messer Torello, putting faith in Saladin's words and having many a time heard say that this was possible and had indeed been often enough done, began to take comfort and pressed Saladin to dispatch. The Soldan accordingly charged a nigromancer of his, of whose skill he had aforetime made proof, to cast about for a means whereby Messer Torello should be in one night transported upon a bed to Pavia, to which the magician replied that it should be done, but that, for the gentleman's own weal, he must put him to sleep.

This done, Saladin returned to Messer Torello and finding him altogether resolved to seek at any hazard to be in Pavia at the term appointed, if it were possible, and in default thereof, to die, bespoke him thus, "Messer Torello, God knoweth that I neither will nor can anywise blame you if you tenderly love your lady and are fearful of her becoming another's for that, of all the women I ever saw, she it is whose manners, whose fashions and whose demeanor (leaving be her beauty, which is but a short-lived flower), appear to me most worthy to be commended and held dear. It had been very grateful to me, since fortune hath sent you hither, that we should have passed together, as equal masters in the governance of this my realm, such time as you and I have to live, and if this was not to be vouchsafed me of God, it being fated that you should take it to heart to seek either to die or to find yourself in Pavia at the appointed term, I should above all have desired to know it in

time, that I might have you transported to your house with such honor, such magnificence and in such company as your worth meriteth. However, since this hath not been vouchsafed and you desire to be presently there, I will e'en, as I may, dispatch you thither after the fashion whereof I have bespoken you." "My lord," replied Messer Torello, "your acts, without your words, have given me sufficient proof of your favor, which I have never merited in such supreme degree, and of that which you say, though you had not said it, I shall live and die most assured; but, since I have taken this resolve, I pray you that that which you tell me you will do may be done speedily, for that to-morrow is the last day I am to be looked for."

Saladin answered that this should without fail be accomplished and accordingly, on the morrow, meaning to send him away that same night, he let make, in a great hall of his palace, a very goodly and rich bed of mattresses, all, according to their usance, of velvet and cloth of gold and caused lay thereon a counterpoint curiously wrought in various figures with great pearls and jewels of great price (the which here in Italy was after esteemed an inestimable treasure) and two pillows such as sorted with a bed of that fashion. This done, he bade invest Messer Torello, who was presently well and strong again, in a gown of the Saracen fashion, the richest and goodliest thing that had ever been seen of any, and wind about his head, after their guise, one of his longest turban-cloths. Then, it growing late, he betook himself with many of his barons to the chamber where Messer Torello was and seating himself, well nigh weeping, by his side, bespoke him thus: "Messer Torello, the hour draweth near that is to sunder me from you, and since I may not bear you company nor cause you be accompanied, by reason of the nature of the journey you have to make, which suffereth it not, needs must I take leave of you here in this chamber, to which end I am come hither. Wherefore, ere I commend you to God, I conjure you, by that love and that friendship that is between us, that you remember you of me and if it be possible, ere our times come to an end, that, whenas you have ordered your affairs in Lombardy, you come at the least once to see me, to the end that, what

while I am cheered by your sight, I may then supply the default which needs must I presently commit by reason of your haste; and against that betide, let it not irk you to visit me with letters and require me of such things as shall please you; for that of a surety I will more gladly do them for you than for any man alive."

As for Messer Torello, he could not contain his tears; wherefore, being hindered thereby, he answered, in a few words, that it was impossible his benefits and his nobility should ever escape his mind and that he would without fail do that which he enjoined him, whenas occasion should be afforded him; whereupon Saladin, having tenderly embraced him and kissed him, bade him with many tears God speed and departed the chamber. The other barons then all took leave of him and followed the Soldan into the hall where he had caused make ready the bed. Meanwhile, it waxing late and the nigromant awaiting and pressing for dispatch, there came a physician to Messer Torello with a draught and making him believe that he gave it him to fortify him, caused him drink it; nor was it long ere he fell asleep and so, by Saladin's commandment, was carried into the hall and laid upon the bed aforesaid, whereon the Soldan placed a great and goodly crown of great price and inscribed it on such wise that it was after manifestly understood to be sent by him to Messer Torello's lady; after which he put on Torello's finger a ring, wherein was a carbuncle enchased, so resplendent that it seemed a lighted flambeau, the value whereof could scarce be reckoned, and girt him with a sword, whose garniture might not lightly be appraised. Moreover, he let hang a fermail on his breast, wherein were pearls whose like were never seen, together with other precious stones galore, and on his either side he caused set two great basins of gold, full of doubloons, and many strings of pearls and rings and girdles and other things, which it were tedious to recount, round about him. This done, he kissed him once more and bade the nigromant dispatch, whereupon, in his presence, the bed was incontinent taken away, Messer Torello and all, and Saladin abode devising of him with his barons.

Meanwhile, Messer Torello had been set down, even as

he had requested, in the church of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro at Pavia, with all the jewels and ornaments aforesaid, and yet slept when, matins having sounded, the sacristan of the church entered, with a light in his hand, and chancing suddenly to espy the rich bed, not only marveled, but seized with a terrible fright, turned and fled. The abbot and the monks, seeing him flee, marveled and questioned him of the cause, which he told them; whereupon quoth the abbot, "Marry, thou art no child nor art thou new to the church that thou shouldst thus lightly take fright; let us go see who hath played the bugbear with thee." Accordingly, kindling several lights, the abbot and all his monks entered the church and saw that wonder-rich and goodly bed and thereon the gentleman asleep; and what while, misdoubting and fearful, they gazed upon the noble jewels, without drawing anywise nearer to the bed, it befell that, the virtue of the draught being spent, Messer Torello awoke and heaved a great sigh, which when the monks saw and heard, they took to flight, abbot and all, affrighted and crying, "Lord aid us!" Messer Torello opened his eyes and looking about him, plainly perceived himself to be whereas he had asked Saladin to have him carried, at which he was mightily content. Then, sitting up, he particularly examined that which he had about him, and for all he had before known of the magnificence of Saladin, it seemed to him now greater and he knew it more. Nevertheless, without moving farther, seeing the monks flee and divining why, he proceeded to call the abbot by name, praying him be not afraid, for that he was Torello his nephew. The abbot, hearing this, waxed yet more fearful, as holding him for dead many months before; but, after awhile, taking assurance by true arguments and hearing himself called, he made the sign of the cross and went up to him; whereupon quoth Messer Torello, "How now, father mine, of what are you adread? Godamercy, I am alive and returned hither from beyond seas."

The abbot, for all he had a great beard and was clad after the Saracen fashion, presently recognized him and altogether reassured, took him by the hand, saying, "My son, thou art welcome back." Then he continued, "Thou must not marvel at our affright, for that there is not a man in

these parts but firmly believeth thee to be dead, insomuch that I must tell thee that Madam Adalieta thy wife, overmastered by the prayers and threats of her kinsfolk and against her own will, is married again and is this morning to go to her new husband; ay, and the bridefeast and all that pertaineth unto the nuptial festivities is prepared." Therewithal Messer Torello arose from off the rich bed and greeting the abbot and the monks with marvelous joyance, prayed them all to speak with none of that his return, against he should have dispatched an occasion of his; after which, having caused lay up all the costly jewels in safety, he recounted to his uncle all that had befallen him up to that moment. The abbot rejoiced in his happy fortunes and together with him, rendered thanks to God, after which Messer Torello asked him who was his lady's new husband. The abbot told him and Torello said, "I have a mind, ere folk know of my return, to see what manner countenance is that of my wife in these nuptials; wherefore, albeit it is not the usance of men of your habit to go to entertainments of this kind, I would have you contrive, for the love of me, that we may go thither, you and I." The abbot replied that he would well and accordingly, as soon as it was day, he sent to the new bridegroom, saying that he would fain be at his nuptials with a friend of his, whereto the gentleman answered that it liked him passing well.

Accordingly, eating-time come, Messer Torello, clad as he was, repaired with his uncle to the bridegroom's house, beheld with wonderment of all who saw him, but recognized of none; and the abbot told every one that he was a Saracen sent ambassador from the Soldan to the King of France. He was, therefore, seated at a table right overagainst his lady, whom he beheld with the utmost pleasure, and him-seemed she was troubled in countenance at these new nuptials. She, in her turn, looked whiles upon him, but not of any cognizance that she had of him, for that his great beard and outlandish habit and the firm assurance she had that he was dead hindered her thereof. Presently, whenas it seemed to him time to essay if she remembered her of him, he took the ring she had given him at his parting and calling a lad who served before her, said to him, "Say to the bride,

on my part, that it is the usance in my country, whenas any stranger, such as I am here, eateth at the bridefeast of any new-married lady, like herself, that she, in token that she holdeth him welcome at her table, send him the cup, wherein she drinketh, full of wine, whereof after the stranger hath drunken what he will, the cup being covered again, the bride drinketh the rest."

The page did his errand to the lady, who, like a well-bred and discreet woman as she was, believing him to be some great gentleman, commanded, to show him that she had his coming in gree, that a great gilded cup, which stood before her, should be washed and filled with wine and carried to the gentleman; and so it was done. Messer Torello, taking her ring in his mouth, contrived in drinking to drop it, unseen of any, into the cup, wherein having left but a little wine, he covered it again and dispatched it to the lady. Madam Adalieta, taking the cup and uncovering it, that she might accomplish his usance, set it to her mouth and seeing the ring, considered it awhile, without saying aught; then, knowing it for that which she had given to Messer Torello at parting, she took it up and looking fixedly upon him whom she deemed a stranger, presently recognized him; whereupon, as she were waxen mad, she overthrew the table she had before her and cried out, saying, "It is my lord, it is indeed Messer Torello!" Then, running to the place where he sat, she cast herself as far forward as she might, without taking thought to her clothes or to aught that was on the table, and clapped him close in her arms nor could, for word or deed of any there, be loosed from his neck till she was bidden of Messer Torello contain herself somewhat, for that time enough would yet be afforded her to embrace him. She having accordingly arisen and the nuptials being by this all troubled, albeit in part more joyous than ever for the recovery of such a gentleman, every one, at Messer Torello's request, abode quiet; whereupon he related to them all that had betided him from the day of his departure up to that moment, concluding that the gentleman, who, deeming him dead, had taken his lady to wife, must not hold it ill if he, being alive, took her again unto himself.

The bridegroom, though somewhat mortified, answered

frankly and as a friend that it rested with himself to do what most pleased him of his own. Accordingly the lady put off the ring and crown had of her new groom and donned the ring which she had taken from the cup and the crown sent her by the Soldan; then, issuing forth of the house where they were, they betook themselves, with all the nuptial train, to Messer Torello's house and there recomforted his disconsolate friends and kindred and all the townfolk, who regarded his return as well nigh a miracle, with long and joyous festival. As for Messer Torello, after imparting of his precious jewels to him who had had the expense of the nuptials as well as to the abbot and many others, and signifying his happy repatriation by more than one message to Saladin, whose friend and servant he still professed himself, he lived many years thereafterward with his noble lady and thenceforth used more hospitality and courtesy than ever. Such then was the issue of the troubles of Messer Torello and his beloved lady and the recompense of their cheerful and ready hospitalities, the which many study to practice, who, albeit they have the wherewithal, do yet so ill contrive it that they make those on whom they bestow their courtesies buy them, ere they have done with them, for more than their worth; wherefore, if no reward ensue to them thereof, neither themselves nor others should marvel thereat.



THE GRIEF OF THE FAITHFUL COSTANZA

Costanza loveth Martuccio Gomito and hearing that he is dead, embarketh for despair alone in a boat, which is carried by the wind to Susa. Finding her lover alive at Tunis, she discovereth herself to him and he, being great in favor with the king for counsels given, espouseth her and returneth rich with her to Lipari.

NEAR unto Sicily is an islet called Lipari, wherein, no great while ago, was a very fair damsel called Costanza, born of a very considerable family there. It chanced that a young man of the same island, called Martuccio Gomito, who was very agreeable and well bred and of approved worth in his craft, fell in love with her; and she in like manner so burned for him that she was never easy save whenas she saw him. Martuccio, wishing to have her to wife, caused demand her of her father, who answered that he was poor and that therefore he would not give her to him. The young man, enraged to see himself rejected for poverty, in concert with certain of his friends and kinsmen, equipped a light ship and swore never to return to Lipari, except rich. Accordingly, he departed thence and turning corsair, fell to cruising off the coast of Barbary and plundering all who were weaker than himself; wherein fortune was favorable enough to him, had he known how to set bounds to his wishes; but, it sufficing him not to have waxed very rich, he and his comrades, in a brief space of time, it befell that, whilst they sought to grow overrich, he was, after a long defense, taken and plundered with all his companions by certain ships of the Saracens, who, after scuttling the vessel and sacking the greater part of the crew, carried Martuccio to Tunis, where he was put in prison and long kept in misery.

The news was brought to Lipari, not by one or by two, but by many and divers persons, that he and all on board the bark had been drowned; whereupon the girl, who had been beyond measure woebegone for her lover's departure, hearing that he was dead with the others, wept sore and

resolved in herself to live no longer; but, her heart suffering her not to slay herself by violence, she determined to give a new occasion to her death. Accordingly, she issued secretly forth of her father's house one night and betaking herself to the harbor, happened upon a fishing smack, a little aloof from the other ships, which, for that its owners had but then landed therefrom, she found furnished with mast and sail and oars. In this she hastily embarked and rowed herself out to sea; then, being somewhat skilled in the mariner's art, as the women of that island mostly are, she made sail and casting the oars and rudder adrift, committed herself altogether to the mercy of the waves, conceiving that it must needs happen that the wind would either overturn a boat without lading or steersman or drive it upon some rock and break it up, whereby she could not, even if she would, escape, but must of necessity be drowned. Accordingly, wrapping her head in a mantle, she laid herself, weeping, in the bottom of the boat.

But it befell altogether otherwise than as she had conceived, for that, the wind being northerly and very light and there being well nigh no sea, the boat rode it out in safety and brought her on the morrow, about vespers, to a beach near a town called Susa, a good hundred miles beyond Tunis. The girl, who, for aught that might happen, had never lifted nor meant to lift her head, felt nothing of it being ashore more than at sea; but, as chance would have it, there was on the beach, whenas the bark struck upon it, a poor woman in act to take up from the sun the nets of the fishermen her masters, who, seeing the bark, marveled how it should be left to strike full sail upon the land. Thinking that the fishermen aboard were asleep, she went up to the bark and seeing none therein but the damsel aforesaid, who slept fast, called her many times and having at last aroused her and knowing her by her habit for a Christian, asked her in Latin how she came there in that bark all alone. The girl, hearing her speak Latin, misdoubted her a shift of wind must have driven her back to Lipari and starting suddenly to her feet, looked about her, but knew not the country, and seeing herself on land, asked the good woman where she was; to which she answered, "Daughter mine,

thou art near unto Susa in Barbary." The girl, hearing this, was woeful for that God had not chosen to vouchsafe her the death she sought, and being in fear of shame and not knowing what to do, she seated herself at the foot of her bark and fell a-weeping.

The good woman, seeing this, took pity upon her and brought her, by dint of entreaty, into a little hut of hers and there so humored her that she told her how she came thither; whereupon, seeing that she was fasting, she set before her her own dry bread and somewhat of fish and water and so besought her that she ate a little. Costanza after asked her who she was that she spoke Latin thus; to which she answered that she was from Trapani and was called Carapresa and served certain Christian fishermen there. The girl, hearing the name of Carapresa, albeit she was exceeding woebegone and knew not what reason moved her thereunto, took it unto herself for a good augury to have heard this name and began to hope, without knowing what, and somewhat to abate of her wish to die. Then, without discovering who or whence she was, she earnestly besought the good woman to have pity, for the love of God, on her youth and give her some counsel how she might escape any affront being offered her.

Carapresa, like a good woman as she was, hearing this, left her in her hut, whilst she hastily gathered up her nets; then, returning to her, she wrapped her from head to foot in her own mantle and carried her to Susa, where she said to her, "Costanza, I will bring thee into the house of a very good Saracen lady, whom I serve oftentimes in her occasions and who is old and pitiful. I will commend thee to her as most I may and I am very certain that she will gladly receive thee and use thee as a daughter; and do thou, abiding with her, study thine utmost, in serving her, to gain her favor, against God send thee a better fortune." And as she said, so she did. The lady, who was well stricken in years, hearing the woman's story, looked the girl in the face and fell a-weeping; then, taking her by the hand, she kissed her on the forehead and carried her into her house, where she and sundry other women abode, without any man, and wrought all with their hands at various crafts,

doing divers works of silk and palm-fiber and leather. Costanza soon learned to do some of these and falling to working with the rest, became in such favor with the lady and the others that it was a marvelous thing; nor was it long before, with their teaching, she learnt their language.

What while she abode thus at Susa, being now mourned at home for lost and dead, it befell that, one Mariabdela being King of Tunis, a certain youth of great family and much puissance in Granada, avouching that that kingdom belonged to himself, levied a great multitude of folk and came upon King Mariabdela, to oust him from the kingship. This came to the ears of Martuccio Gomito in prison and he, knowing the Barbary language excellently well and hearing that the king was making great efforts for his defense, said to one of those who had him and his fellows in keeping, "An I might have speech of the king, my heart assureth me that I could give him a counsel, by which he should gain this his war." The keeper reported these words to his chief, and he carried them incontinent to the king, who bade fetch Martuccio and asked him what might be his counsel; whereto he made answer on this wise, "My lord, if, what time I have otherwhiles frequented these your dominions, I have noted aright the order you keep in your battles, meseemeth you wage them more with archers than with aught else; wherefore, if a means could be found whereby your adversary's bowmen should lack of arrows, whilst your own had abundance thereof, methinketh your battle would be won." "Without doubt," answered the king, "an this might be compassed, I should deem myself assured of victory." Whereupon, "My lord," quoth Martuccio, "and you will, this may very well be done, and you shall hear how. You must let make strings for your archer's bows much thinner than those which are everywhere commonly used and after let make arrows, the notches whereof shall not serve but for these thin strings. This must be so secretly done that your adversary should know nought thereof; else would he find a remedy therefor; and the reason for which I counsel you thus is this. After your enemy's archers and your own shall have shot all their arrows, you know that, the battle lasting, it will behoove your foes to

gather up the arrows shot by your men and the latter in like manner to gather theirs; but the enemy will not be able to make use of your arrows, by reason of the strait notches which will not take their thick strings, whereas the contrary will betide your men of the enemy's arrows, for that the thin strings will excellently well take the wide-notched arrows; and so your men will have abundance of ammunition, whilst the others will suffer default thereof."

The king, who was a wise prince, was pleased with Martuccio's counsel and punctually following it, found himself thereby to have won his war. Wherefore Martuccio became in high favor with him and rose in consequence to great and rich estate. The report of these things spread over the land and it came presently to Costanza's ears that Martuccio Gomito, whom she had long deemed dead, was alive, whereupon the love of him, that was now grown cool in her heart, broke out of a sudden into fresh flame and waxed greater than ever, whilst dead hope revived in her. Therewithal she altogether discovered her every adventure to the good lady with whom she dwelt, and told her that she would fain go to Tunis, so she might satisfy her eyes of that whereof her ears had made them desirous, through the reports received. The old lady greatly commended her purpose and taking ship with her, carried her, as if she had been her mother, to Tunis, where they were honorably entertained in the house of a kinswoman of hers. There she despatched Carapresa, who had come with them, to see what she could learn of Martuccio, and she, finding him alive and in great estate and reporting this to the old gentlewoman, it pleased the latter to will to be she who would signify unto Martuccio that his Costanza was come thither to him; wherefore, taking herself one day whereas he was, she said to him, "Martuccio, there is come to my house a servant of thine from Lipari, who would fain speak with thee privily there; wherefore, not to trust to others, I have myself, at his desire, come to give thee notice thereof." He thanked her and followed her to her house, where when Costanza saw him, she was like to die of gladness and unable to contain herself, ran straightway with open arms to throw herself on his neck; then, embracing him, without availing to say

aught, she fell a-weeping tenderly, both for compassion of their past ill fortunes and for present gladness.

Martuccio, seeing his mistress, abode awhile dumb for amazement, then said, sighing, "O my Costanza, art thou then yet alive? It is long since I heard that thou was lost; nor in our country was aught known of thee." So saying, he embraced her, weeping, and kissed her tenderly. Costanza then related to him all that had befallen her and the honorable treatment which she had received from the gentlewoman with whom she dwelt; and Martuccio, after much discourse, taking leave of her, repaired to the king his master and told him all, to wit, his own adventures and those of the damsel, adding that, with his leave, he meant to take her to wife, according to our law. The king marvelled at these things and sending for the damsel and hearing from her that it was even as Martuccio had avouched, said to her, "Then hast thou right well earned him to husband." Then, letting bring very great and magnificent gifts, he gave part thereof to her and part to Martuccio, granting them leave to do one with the other that which was most pleasing unto each of them; whereupon Martuccio, having entreated the gentlewoman who had harbored Costanza with the utmost honor and thanked her for that which she had done to serve her and bestowed on her such gifts as sorted with her quality, commended her to God and took leave of her, he and his mistress, not without many tears from the latter. Then, with the king's leave, they embarked with Carapresa on board a little ship and returned with a fair wind to Lipari, where so great was the rejoicing that it might never be told. There Martuccio took Costanza to wife and held great and goodly nuptials; after which they long in peace and repose had enjoyment of their loves.



THE FALCON OF FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI

Federigo degli Alberighi loveth and is not loved. He wasteth his substance in prodigal hospitality till there is left him but one sole falcon, which, having nought else, he giveth his mistress to eat, on her coming to his house; and she, learning this, changeth her mind and taking him to husband, maketh him rich again.

THERE was once in Florence a young man called Federigo, son of Messer Filippo Alberighi⁸ and renowned for deeds of arms and courtesy over every other bachelor in Tuscany, who, as betideth most gentlemen, became enamored of a gentlewoman named Madam Giovanna, in her day held one of the fairest and sprightliest ladies that were in Florence; and to win her love, he held jousts and tourneyings and made entertainments and gave gifts and spent his substance without any stint; but she, being no less virtuous than fair, recked nought of these things done for her nor of him who did them. Federigo spending thus far beyond his means and gaining nought, his wealth, as lightly happeneth, in course of time came to an end and he abode poor, nor was aught left him but a poor little farm, on whose returns he lived very meagerly, and to boot a falcon he had, one of the best in the world. Wherefore, being more in love than ever and himseeming he might no longer make such a figure in the city as he would fain do, he took up his abode at Campi, where his farm was, and there bore his poverty with patience, hawking whenas he might and asking of no one.

Federigo being thus come to extremity, it befell one day that Madam Giovanna's husband fell sick and seeing himself nigh upon death, made his will, wherein, being very rich, he left a son of his, now well grown, his heir, after which, having much loved Madam Giovanna, he substituted her to his heir, in case his son should die without lawful issue, and died. Madam Giovanna, being thus left a widow, betook herself that summer, as is the usance of our ladies, into the country with her son to an estate of hers very near that of

Federigo; wherefore it befell that lad made acquaintance with the latter and began to take delight in hawks and hounds, and having many a time seen his falcon flown and being strangely taken therewith, longed sore to have it, but dared not ask it of him, seeing it so dear to him. The thing standing thus, if came to pass that the lad fell sick, whereat his mother was sore concerned, as one who had none but him and loved him with all her might, and abode about him all day, comforting him without cease; and many a time she asked him if there were aught he desired, beseeching him tell it her, for that, an it might be gotten, she would contrive that he should have it. The lad, having heard these offers many times repeated, said, "Mother mine, an you could procure me to have Federigo's falcon, methinketh I should soon be whole."

The lady, hearing this, bethought herself awhile and began to consider how she should do. She knew that Federigo had long loved her and had never gotten of her so much as a glance of the eye; wherefore quoth she in herself, "How shall I send or go to him to seek of him this falcon, which is, by all I hear, the best that ever flew and which, to boot, maintaineth him in the world? And how can I be so graceless as to offer to take this from a gentleman who hath none other pleasure left?" Perplexed with this thought and knowing not what to say, for all she was very certain of getting the bird, if she asked for it, she made no reply to her son, but abode silent. However, at last, the love of her son so got the better of her that she resolved in herself to satisfy him, come what might, and not to send, but to go herself for the falcon and fetch it to him. Accordingly she said to him, "My son, take comfort and bethink thyself to grow well again, for I promise thee that the first thing I do to-morrow morning I will go for it and fetch it to thee." The boy was rejoiced at this and showed some amendment that same day.

Next morning, the lady, taking another lady to bear her company, repaired, by way of diversion, to Federigo's little house and inquired for the latter, who, for that it was no weather for hawking nor had been for some days past, was then in a garden he had, overlooking the doing of certain

little matters of his, and hearing that Madam Giovanna asked for him at the door, ran thither, rejoicing and marveling exceedingly. She, seeing him come, rose and going with womanly graciousness to meet him, answered his respectful salutation with "Give you good day, Federigo!" then went on to say, "I am come to make thee amends for that which thou hast suffered through me, in loving me more than should have behooved thee; and the amends in question is this that I purpose to dine with thee this morning familiarly, I and this lady my companion." "Madam," answered Federigo humbly, "I remember me not to have ever received any ill at your hands, but on the contrary so much good that, if ever I was worth aught, it came about through your worth and the love I bore you; and assuredly, albeit you have come to a poor host, this your gracious visit is far more precious to me than it would be an it were given me to spend over again as much as that which I have spent aforetime." So saying, he shamefastly received her into his house and thence brought her into his garden, where, having none else to bear her company, he said to her, "Madam, since there is none else here, this good woman, wife of yonder husband-man, will bear you company, whilst I go see the table laid."

Never till that moment, extreme as was his poverty, had he been so dolorously sensible of the straits to which he had brought himself for the lack of those riches he had spent on such disorderly wise. But that morning, finding he had nothing wherewithal he might honorably entertain the lady, for love of whom he had aforetime entertained folk without number, he was made perforce aware of his default and ran hither and thither, perplexed beyond measure, like a man beside himself, inwardly cursing his ill fortune, but found neither money nor aught he might pawn. It was now growing late and he having a great desire to entertain the gentle lady with somewhat, yet choosing not to have recourse to his own laborer, much less any one else, his eye fell on his good falcon, which he saw on his perch in his little saloon; whereupon, having no other resource, he took the bird and finding him fat, deemed him a dish worthy of such a lady. Accordingly, without more ado, he wrung the hawk's neck and hastily caused a little maid of his pluck it and truss it

and after put it on the spit and roast it diligently. Then, the table laid and covered with very white cloths, whereof he had yet some store, he returned with a blithe countenance to the lady in the garden and told her that dinner was ready, such as it was in his power to provide. Accordingly, the lady and her friend, arising, betook themselves to table and in company with Federigo, who served them with the utmost diligence, ate the good falcon, unknowing what they did.

Presently, after they had risen from table and had abidden with him awhile in cheerful discourse, the lady, thinking it time to tell that wherefor she was come, turned to Federigo and courteously bespoke him, saying, "Federigo, I doubt not a jot but that, when thou hearest that which is the especial occasion of my coming hither, thou wilt marvel at my presumption, remembering thee of thy past life and of my virtue, which latter belike thou reputedst cruelty and hardness of heart; but, if thou hadst or hadst had children, by whom thou mightest know how potent is the love one beareth them, meseemeth certain that thou wouldst in part hold me excused. But although thou hast none, I, who have one child, cannot therefore escape the common laws to which other mothers are subject and whose enforcements it behooving me ensue, need must I, against my will and contrary to all right and seemliness, ask of thee a boon, which I know is supremely dear to thee (and that with good reason, for that thy sorry fortune hath left thee none other delight, none other diversion, none other solace), to wit, thy falcon, whereof my boy is so sore enamored that, an I carry it not to him, I fear me his present disorder will be so aggravated that there may presently ensue thereof somewhat whereby I shall lose him. Where I conjure thee,—not by the love thou bearest me and whereto thou art nowise beholden, but by thine own nobility, which in doing courtesy hath approved itself greater than in any other,—that it please thee give it to me, so by the gift I may say I have kept my son alive and thus made him for ever thy debtor."

Federigo, hearing what the lady asked and knowing that he could not oblige her, for that he had given her the falcon to eat, fell a-weeping in her presence, ere he could answer

a word. The lady at first believed that his tears arose from grief at having to part from his good falcon and was like to say that she would not have it. However, she contained herself and awaited what Federigo should reply, who, after weeping awhile, made answer thus: "Madam, since it pleased God that I should set my love on you, I have in many things reputed fortune contrary to me and have complained of her; but all the ill turns she hath done me have been a light matter in comparison with that which she doth me at this present and for which I can never more be reconciled to her, considering that you are come hither to my poor house, whereas you deigned not to come what while I was rich, and seek of me a little boon, the which she hath so wrought that I cannot grant you; and why this cannot be I will tell you briefly. When I heard that you, of your favor, were minded to dine with me, I deemed it a right thing and a seemly, having regard to your worth and the nobility of your station, to honor you, as far as in me lay, with some choicer victual than that which is commonly set before other folk; wherefore, remembering me of the falcon which you ask of me and of his excellence, I judged him a dish worthy of you. This very morning, then, you have had him roasted upon the trencher, and indeed I had accounted him excellently well bestowed; but now, seeing that you would fain have had him on other wise, it is so great a grief to me that I cannot oblige you therein that methinketh I shall never forgive myself therefor." So saying, in witness of this, he let cast before her the falcon's feathers and feet and beak.

The lady, seeing and hearing this, first blamed him for having, to give a woman to eat, slain such a falcon, and after inwardly much commended the greatness of his soul, which poverty had not availed nor might anywise avail to abate. Then, being put out of all hope of having the falcon and fallen therefore in doubt of her son's recovery, she took her leave and returned, all disconsolate, to the latter, who, before many days had passed, whether for chagrin that he could not have the bird or for that his disorder was e'en fated to bring him to that pass, departed this life, to the inexpressible grief of his mother. After she had abidden awhile full of tears and affliction, being left very rich and

yet young, she was more than once urged by her brothers to marry again, and albeit she would fain not have done so, yet, finding herself importuned and calling to mind Federigo's worth and his last magnificence, to wit, the having slain such a falcon for her entertainment, she said to them, "I would gladly, an it liked you, abide as I am; but, since it is your pleasure that I take a (second) husband, certes I will never take any other, an I have not Federigo degli Alberighi." Whereupon her brothers, making mock of her, said, "Silly woman that thou art, what is this thou sayest? How canst thou choose him, seeing he hath nothing in the world?" "Brothers mine," answered she, "I know very well that it is as you say; but I would liefer have a man that lacketh of riches than riches that lack of a man." Her brethren, hearing her mind and knowing Federigo for a man of great merit, poor though he was, gave her, with all her wealth, to him, even as she would; and he, seeing himself married to a lady of worth and one of whom he had loved so dear and exceeding rich, to boot, became a better husband of his substance and ended his days with her in joy and solace.



A NARROW ESCAPE

Madam Isabella, being in company with Leonetto her lover, is visited by one Messer Lambertuccio, of whom she is beloved; her husband returning, [unexpected,] she sendeth Lambertuccio forth of the house, whinger in hand, and the husband after escortieth Leonetto home.

THERE was once a young lady, both gently born and very fair, who was the wife of a very worthy and notable gentleman; and as it happeneth often that folk cannot for ever brook one same food, but desire bytimes to vary their diet, this lady, her husband not altogether satisfying her, became enamored of a young man called Leonetto and very well bred and agreeable, for all he was of no great extraction. He on like wise fell in love with her, and as you know that seldom doth that which both parties desire abide without effect, it was no great while before accomplishment was given to their loves. Now it chanced that, she being a fair and engaging lady, a gentleman called Messer Lambertuccio became sore enamored of her, whom, for that he seemed to her a disagreeable man and a tiresome, she could not for aught in the world bring herself to love. However, after soliciting her amain with messages and it availing him nought, he sent to her threatening her, for that he was a notable man, to dishonor her, and she did not his pleasure; wherefore she, fearful and knowing his character, submitted herself to do his will.

It chanced one day that the lady, whose name was Madam Isabella, being gone, as is our custom in summer-time, to abide at a very goodly estate she had in the country and her husband having ridden somewhither to pass some days abroad, she sent for Leonetto to come and be with her, whereat he was mightily rejoiced and betook himself thither incontinent. Meanwhile, Messer Lambertuccio, hearing that her husband was gone abroad, took horse and repairing, all alone, to her house, knocked at the door. The lady's waiting-woman, seeing him, came straight to her mistress, who was closeted with Leonetto, and called to her, saying,

"Madam, Messer Lambertuccio is below, all alone." The lady, hearing this, was the woofullest woman in the world, but, as she stood in great fear of Messer Lambertuccio, she besought Leonetto not to take it ill to hide himself awhile behind the curtains of her bed till such time as the other should be gone. Accordingly, Leonetto, who feared him no less than did the lady, hid himself there and she bade the maid go upon to Messer Lambertuccio, which being done, he lighted down in the courtyard and making his palfrey fast to a staple there, went up into the house. The lady put on a cheerful countenance and coming to the head of the stair, received him with as good a grace as she might and asked him what brought him thither; whereupon he caught her in his arms and clipped her and kissed her, saying, "My soul, I understood that your husband was abroad and am come accordingly to be with you awhile." After these words, they entered a bedchamber, where they locked themselves in and Messer Lambertuccio fell to taking delight of her.

As they were thus engaged, it befell, altogether out of the lady's expectation, that her husband returned, whom when the maid saw near the house, she ran in haste to the lady's chamber and said, "Madam, here is my lord come back; methinketh he is already below in the courtyard." When the lady heard this, bethinking her that she had two men in the house and knowing that there was no hiding Messer Lambertuccio, by reason of his palfrey which was in the courtyard, she gave herself up for lost. Nevertheless, taking a sudden resolution, she sprang hastily down from the bed and said to Messer Lambertuccio, "Sir, an you wish me any wise well and would save me from death, do that which I shall bid you. Take your hanger naked in your hand and go down the stair with an angry air and all disordered and begone, saying, 'I vow to God that I will take him elsewhere.' And should my husband offer to detain you or question you of aught, do you say no otherwhat than that which I have told you, but take horse and look you abide not with him on any account." The gentleman answered that he would well, and accordingly, drawing his hanger, he did as she had enjoined him, with a face all afire

what with the swink he had furnished and with anger at the husband's return. The latter was by this dismounted in the courtyard and marvelled to see the palfrey there; then, offering to go up into the house, he saw Messer Lambertuccio come down and wondering both at his words and his air, said, "What is this, sir?" Messer Lambertuccio putting his foot in the stirrup and mounting to horse, said nought but, "Cock's body, I shall find him again elsewhere," and made off.

The gentleman, going up, found his wife at the stair-head, all disordered and fearful, and said to her, "What is all this? Whom goeth Messer Lambertuccio threatening thus in such a fury?" The lady, withdrawing towards the chamber where Leonetto was, so he might hear her, answered, "Sir, never had I the like of this fright. There came fleeing hither but now a young man, whom I know not, followed by Messer Lambertuccio, hanger in hand, and finding by chance the door of this chamber open, said to me, all trembling, 'For God's sake, madam, help me, that I be not slain in your arms.' I rose to my feet and was about to question him who he was and what ailed him, when, behold, in rushed Messer Lambertuccio, saying, 'Where art thou, traitor?' I set myself before the chamber-door and hindered him from entering; and he was in so far courteous that, after many words, seeing it pleased me not that he should enter there, he went his way down, as you have seen." Quoth the husband, "Wife, thou didst well; it were too great a reproach to us, had a man been slain in our house, and Messer Lambertuccio did exceeding unmannerly to follow a person who had taken refuge here."

Then he asked where the young man was, and the lady answered, "Indeed, sir, I know not where he hath hidden himself." Then said the husband, "Where art thou? Come forth in safety." Whereupon Leonetto, who had heard everything, came forth all trembling for fear, (as indeed he had had a great fright,) of the place where he had hidden himself, and the gentleman said to him, "What hast thou to do with Messer Lambertuccio?" "Sir," answered he, "I have nothing in the world to do with him; wherefore methinketh assuredly he is either not in his right wits or

hath mistaken me for another; for that no sooner did he set eyes on me in the road not far from this house than he forth-right clapped his hand to his hanger and said, "Traitor, thou art a dead man!" I stayed not to ask why, but took to my heels as best I might and made my way hither, where, thanks to God and to this gentlewoman, I have escaped." Quoth the husband, "Go to; have no fear; I will bring thee to thine own house safe and sound, and thou canst after seek out what thou hast to do with him." Accordingly, when they had supped, he mounted him a-horseback and carrying him back to Florence, left him in his own house. As for Leonetto, that same evening, according as he had been lessoned of the lady, he privily bespoke Messer Lambertuccio and took such order with him that, albeit there was much talk of the matter thereafterward, the husband never for all that became aware of the cheat that had been put on him by his wife.



TEDALDO ELISEI RESCUES HIS MISTRESS'S HUSBAND

Tedaldo Elisei, having fallen out with his mistress, departeth Florence and returning thither, after awhile, in a pilgrim's favor, speaketh with the lady and maketh her cognizant of her error; after which he delivereth her husband, who had been convicted of murdering him, from death and reconciling him with his brethren, thenceforward discreetly enjoyeth himself with his mistress.

THERE was, in Florence a noble youth, whose name was Tedaldo Elisei and who, being beyond measure enamored of a lady called Madam Ermellina, the wife of one Aldobrandino Palermini, deserved, for his praise-worthy fashions, to gain her good will. However, Fortune, the enemy of the happy, denied him this solace, for that, whatever might have been the cause, the lady, after complying awhile with Tedaldo's wishes, suddenly altogether withdrew her good graces from him and not only refused to hearken to any message of his, but would on no wise see him; wherefore he fell into a dire and cruel melancholy; but his love for her had been so hidden that none guessed it to be the cause of his chagrin. After he had in divers ways studied amain to recover the love himseemed he had lost without his fault and finding all his labor vain, he resolved to withdraw from the world, that he might not afford her who was the cause of his ill the pleasure of seeing him pine away; wherefore, without saying aught to friend or kinsman, save to a comrade of his, who knew all, he took such monies as he might avail to have and departing secretly, came to Ancona, where, under the name of Philipppo di Sanlodeccio, he made acquaintance with a rich merchant and taking service with him, accompanied him to Cyprus on board a ship of his.

His manners and behavior so pleased the merchant that he not only assigned him a good wage, but made him in part his associate and put into his hands a great part of his

affairs, which he ordered so well and so diligently that in a few years he himself became a rich and famous and considerable merchant; and albeit, in the midst of these his dealings, he oft remembered him of his cruel mistress and was grievously tormented of love and yearned sore to look on her again, such was his constancy that seven years long he got the better of the battle. But, chancing one day to hear sing in Cyprus a song that himself had made aforetime and wherein was recounted the love he bore his mistress and she him and the pleasure he had of her, and thinking it could not be she had forgotten him, he flamed up into such a passion of desire to see her again that, unable to endure longer, he resolved to return to Florence.

Accordingly, having set all his affairs in order, he betook himself with one only servant to Ancona and transporting all his goods thither, dispatched them to Florence to a friend of the Anconese his partner, whilst he himself, in the disguise of a pilgrim returning from the Holy Sepulchre, followed secretly after with his servant and coming to Florence, put up at a little hostelry kept by two brothers, in the neighborhood of his mistress's house, whereto he repaired first of all, to see her, an he might. However, he found the windows and doors and all else closed, wherefore his heart misgave him she was dead or had removed thence and he betook himself, in great concern, to the house of his brethren, before which he saw four of the latter clad all in black. At this he marveled exceedingly and knowing himself so changed both in habit and person from that which he was used to be, whenas he departed thence, that he might not lightly be recognized, he boldly accosted a cordwainer hard by and asked him why they were clad in black; whereto he answered, "Yonder men are clad in black for that it is not yet a fortnight since a brother of theirs, who had not been here this great while, was murdered, and I understand they have proved to the court that one Aldobrandino Palermi, who is in prison, slew him, for that he was a well-wisher for his wife and had returned hither unknown to be with her."

Tedaldo marveled exceedingly that any one should so resemble him as to be taken for him and was grieved for Aldo-

brandino's ill fortune. Then, having learned that the lady was alive and well and it being now night, he returned, full of various thoughts, to the inn and having supped with his servant, was put to sleep well nigh at the top of the house. There, what with the many thoughts that stirred him and the badness of the bed and peradventure also by reason of the supper, which had been meager, half the night passed whilst he had not yet been able to fall asleep; wherefore, being awake, himseemed about midnight he heard folk come down into the house from the roof, and after through the chinks of the chamber-door he saw a light come up thither. Thereupon he stole softly to the door and putting his eye to the chink, fell a-spying what this might mean and saw a comely enough lass who held the light, whilst three men, who had come down from the roof, made towards her; and after some greetings had passed between them, one of them said to the girl, "Henceforth, praised be God, we may abide secure, since we know now for certain that the death of Tedaldo Elisei hath been proved by his brethren against Aldobrandino Palermini, who hath confessed thereto, and judgment is now recorded; nevertheless, it behooveth to keep strict silence, for that, should it ever become known that it was we [who slew him], we shall be in the same danger as is Aldobrandino." Having thus bespoken the woman, who showed herself much rejoiced thereat, they left her and going below, betook themselves to bed.

Tedaldo, hearing this, fell a-considering how many and how great are the errors which may befall the minds of men, bethinking him first of his brothers who had bewept and buried a stranger in his stead and after of the innocent man accused on false suspicion and brought by untrue witness to the point of death, no less than of the blind severity of laws and rulers, who oftentimes, under cover of diligent investigation of the truth, cause, by their cruelties, prove that which is false and style themselves ministers of justice and of God, whereas indeed they are executors of iniquity and of the devil; after which he turned his thoughts to the deliverance of Aldobrandino and determined in himself what he should do. Accordingly, arising in the morning, he left his servant at the inn and betook himself alone, whenas it

seemed to him time, to the house of his mistress, where, chancing to find the door open, he entered in and saw the lady seated, all full of tears and bitterness of soul, in a little ground floor room that was there.

At this sight he was like to weep for compassion of her and drawing near to her, said, "Madam, afflict not yourself; your peace is at hand." The lady, hearing this, lifted her eyes and said, weeping, "Good man, thou seemest to me a stranger pilgrim; what knowest thou of my peace or of my affliction?" "Madam," answered Tedaldo, "I am of Constantinople and am but now come hither, being sent of God to turn your tears into laughter and to deliver your husband from death." Quoth she, "An thou be of Constantinople and newly come hither, how knowest thou who I am or who is my husband?" Thereupon, the pilgrim, beginning from the beginning, recounted to her the whole history of Aldobrandino's troubles and told her who she was and how long she had been married and other things which he very well knew of her affairs; whereat she marveled exceedingly and holding him for a prophet, fell on her knees at his feet, beseeching him for God's sake, an he were come for Aldobrandino's salvation, to dispatch, for that the time was short.

The pilgrim, feigning himself a very holy man, said, "Madam, arise and weep not, but hearken well to that which I shall say to you and take good care never to tell it to any. According to that which God hath revealed unto me, the tribulation wherein you now are hath betided you because of a sin committed by you aforetime, which God the Lord hath chosen in part to purge with this present annoy and will have altogether amended of you; else will you fall into far greater affliction." "Sir," answered the lady, "I have many sins and know not which one, more than another, God the Lord would have me amend; wherefore, an you know it, tell me and I will do what I may to amend it." "Madam," rejoined the pilgrim, "I know well enough what it is, nor do I question you thereof the better to know it, but to the intent that, telling it yourself, you may have the more remorse thereof. But let us come to the fact; tell me, do you remember ever to have had a lover?"

The lady, hearing this, heaved a deep sigh and marveled

sore, supposing none had ever known it, albeit, in the days when he was slain who had been buried for Tedaldo, there had been some whispering thereof, for certain words not very discreetly used by Tedaldo's confidant, who knew it; then answered, "I see that God discovereth unto you all men's secrets, wherefore I am resolved not hide mine own from you. True it is that in my youth I loved over all the ill-fortuned youth whose death is laid to my husband's charge, which death I have bewept as sore as it was grievous to me, for that, albeit I showed myself harsh and cruel to him before his departure, yet neither his long absence nor his unhappy death hath availed to tear him from my heart." Quoth the pilgrim, "The hapless youth who is dead you never loved, but Tedaldo Elisei ay. But tell me, what was the occasion of your falling out with him? Did he ever give you any offense?" "Certes, no," replied she; "he never offended against me; the cause of the breach was the prate of an accursed friar to whom I once confessed me and who, when I told him of the love I bore Tedaldo and the privacy I had with him, made such a racket about my ears that I tremble yet to think of it, telling me that, an I desisted not therefrom, I should go in the devil's mouth to the deepest deep of hell and there be cast into everlasting fire; whereupon there entered into me such a fear that I altogether determined to forswear all further converse with him, and that I might have no occasion therefor, I would no longer receive his letters or messages; albeit I believe, had he persevered awhile, instead of getting him gone (as I presume) in despair, that, seeing him, as I did, waste away like snow in the sun, my harsh resolve would have yielded, for that I had no greater desire in the world."

"Madam," rejoined the pilgrim, "it is this sin alone that now afflicteth you. I know for certain that Tedaldo did you no manner of violence; whenas you fell in love with him, you did it of your own free will, for that he pleased you; and as you yourself would have it, he came to you and enjoyed your privacy, wherein both with words and deeds you showed him such complaisance that, if he loved you before, you caused his love redouble a thousand fold. And this being so (as I know it was) what cause should have availed

to move you so harshly to withdraw yourself from him? These things should be pondered awhile beforehand and if you think you may presently have cause to repent thereof, as of ill doing, you ought not to do them. You might, at your pleasure, have ordained of him, as of that which belonged to you, that he should no longer be yours; but to go about to deprive him of yourself, you who were his, was a theft and an unseemly thing, whenas it was not his will.

“But, let us see; maybe Tedaldo deserved this usage? Certes, he did not; you yourself have already confessed it, more by token that I know he loveth you more than himself. No woman was ever so honored, so exalted, so magnified over every other of her sex as were you by him, whenas he found himself where he might fairly speak of you, without engendering suspicion. His every good, his every honor, his every liberty were all committed by him into your hands. Was he not noble and young? Was he not handsome among all his townsmen? Was he not accomplished in such things as pertain unto young men? Was he not loved, cherished and well seen of every one? You will not say nay to thus either. Then how, at the bidding of a scurvy, envious numskull of a friar, could you take such a cruel resolve against him? I know not what error is that of women who eschew men and hold them in little esteem, whenas, considering what themselves are and what and how great is the nobility, beyond every other animal, given of God to man, they should rather glory whenas they are loved of any and prize him over all and study with all diligence to please him, so he may never desist from loving them. This how you did, moved by the prate of a friar, who must for certain have been some broth-swilling pastygorger, you yourself know; and most like he had a mind to put himself in the place whence he studied to expel others.

“This, then, is the sin that Divine justice, the which with a just balance bringeth all its operations to effect, hath willed not to leave unpunished; and even as you without reason studied to withdraw yourself from Tedaldo, so on likewise hath your husband been and is yet, without reason, in peril for Tedaldo, and you in tribulation. Wherefrom an you would be delivered, that which it behooveth you to

promise, and yet more to do, is this: that, should it ever chance that Tedaldo return hither from his long banishment, you will render him again your favor, your love, your goodwill and your privacy and reinstate him in that condition wherein he was, ere you foolishly hearkened to yonder crack-brained friar."

The pilgrim having thus made an end of his discourse, the lady, who had hearkened thereto with the utmost attention, for that his arguments appeared to her most true and that, hearing him say, she accounted herself of a certainty afflicted for the sin of which he spoke, said, "Friend of God, I know full well that the things you allege are true, and in great part by your showing do I perceive what manner of folk are these friars, whom till now I have held all saints. Moreover, I acknowledge my default without doubt to have been great in that which I wrought against Tedaldo; and an I might, I would gladly amend it on such wise as you have said; but how may this be done? Tedaldo can never more return hither; he is dead; wherefore I know not why it should behoove me promise that which may not be performed." "Madam," replied the pilgrim, "according to that which God hath revealed unto me, Tedaldo is nowise dead, but alive and well and in good case, so but he had your favor." Quoth the lady, "Look what you say; I saw him dead before my door of several knife-thrusts and had him in these arms and bathed his face with many tears, the which it may be gave occasion for that which hath been spoken thereof unseemly." "Madam," replied the pilgrim, "whatever you may say, I certify you that Tedaldo is alive, and if you will e'en promise me that [which I ask], with intent to fulfil your promise, I hope you shall soon see him." Quoth she, "That do I promise and will gladly perform; nor could aught betide that would afford me such content as to see my husband free and unharmed and Tedaldo alive."

Thereupon it seemed to Tedaldo time to discover himself and to comfort the lady with more certain hope of her husband, and accordingly he said, "Madam, in order that I may comfort you for your husband, it behooves me reveal to you a secret, which look you discover not unto any, as you value your life." Now they were in a very retired place and alone,

the lady having conceived the utmost confidence of the sanctity which herseemed was in the pilgrim; wherefore Tedaldo, pulling out a ring, which she had given him the last night he had been with her and which he had kept with the utmost diligence, and showing it to her, said, "Madam, know you this?" As soon as she saw it, she recognized it and answered, "Ay, sir; I gave it to Tedaldo aforetime." Whereupon the pilgrim, rising to his feet, hastily cast off his palmer's gown and hat and speaking Florence-fashion, said, "And know you me?"

When the lady saw this, she knew him to be Tedaldo and was all aghast, fearing him as one feareth the dead, an they be seen after death to go as if alive; wherefore she made not towards him to welcome him as Tedaldo returned from Cyprus, but would have fled from him in affright, as he were Tedaldo come back from the tomb. Whereupon, "Madam," quoth he, "fear not; I am your Tedaldo, alive and well, and have never died nor been slain, whatsoever you and my brothers may believe." The lady, somewhat reassured and knowing his voice, considered him awhile longer and avouched in herself that he was certainly Tedaldo; wherefore she threw herself, weeping, on his neck and kissed him, saying, "Welcome back, sweet my Tedaldo."

Tedaldo, having kissed and embraced her, said, "Madam, it is no time now for closer greetings; I must e'en go take order that Aldobrandino may be restored to you safe and sound; whereof I hope that, ere to-morrow come eventide, you shall hear news that will please you; nay, if, as I expect, I have good news of his safety I trust this night to be able to come to you and report them to you at more leisure than I can at this present." Then, donning his gown and hat again, he kissed the lady once more and bidding her be of good hope, took leave of her and repaired whereas Aldobrandino lay in prison, occupied more with fear of imminent death than with hopes of deliverance to come. Tedaldo, with the jailor's consent, went in to him, in the guise of a ghostly comforter, and seating himself by his side, said to him, "Aldobrandino, I am a friend of thine, sent thee for thy deliverance by God, who hath taken pity on thee because of thine innocence; wherefore, if, in reverence to Him,

thou wilt grant me a little boon that I shall ask of thee, thou shalt without fail, ere to-morrow be night, whereas thou lookest for sentence of death, hear that of thine acquittance."

"Honest man," replied the prisoner, "since thou art solicitous of my deliverance, albeit I know thee not nor mind me ever to have seen thee, needs must thou be a friend, as thou sayst. In truth, the sin, for which they say I am to be doomed to death, I never committed; though others enough have I committed aforetime, which, it may be, have brought me to this pass. But this I say to thee, of reverence to God; an He presently have compassion on me, I will not only promise, but gladly do any thing, however great, to say nothing of a little one; wherefore ask that which pleaseth thee, for without fail, if it come to pass that I escape with life, I will punctually perform it." Then said the pilgrim, "What I would have of thee is that thou pardon Tedaldo's four brothers the having brought thee to this pass, believing thee guilty of their brother's death, and have them again for brethren and for friends, whenas they crave thee pardon thereof." Whereto quoth Aldobrandino, "None knoweth but he who hath suffered the affront how sweet a thing is vengeance and with what ardor it is desired, nevertheless, so God may apply Himself to my deliverance, I will freely pardon them; nay, I pardon them now, and if I come off hence alive and escape, I will in this hold such course as shall be to thy liking."

This pleased the pilgrim and without concerning himself to say more to him, he exhorted him to be of good heart, for that, ere the ensuing day came to an end, he should without fail hear very certain news of his safety. Then, taking leave of him, he repaired to the Seignory and said privily to a gentleman who was in session there, "My lord, every one should gladly labor to bring to light the truth of things, and especially those who hold such a room as this of yours, to the end that those may not suffer the penalty who have not committed the crime and that the guilty may be punished; that which may be brought about, to your honor and the bane of those who have merited it, I am come hither to

you. As you know, you have rigorously proceeded against Aldobrandino Palermini and thinking you have found for truth that it was he who slew Tedaldo Elisei, are minded to condemn him; but this is most certainly false, as I doubt not to show you, ere midnight betide, by giving into your hands the murderers of the young man in question."

The worthy gentleman, who was in concern for Aldobrandino, willingly gave ear to the pilgrim's words and having conferred at large with him upon the matter, on his information, took the two innkeeper brothers and their servant, without resistance, in their first sleep. He would have put them to the question, to discover how the case stood; but they brooked it not and each first for himself, and after all together, openly confessed that it was they who had slain Tedaldo Elisei, knowing him not. Being questioned of the case, they said [that it was] for that he had given the wife of one of them sore annoy, what while they were abroad, and would fain have enforced her to his will.

The pilgrim, having heard this, with the magistrate's consent took his leave and repairing privily to the house of Madam Ermellina, found her alone and awaiting him, (all else in the house being gone to sleep,) alike desirous of having good news of her husband and fully reconciling herself with her Tedaldo. He accosted her with a joyful countenance and said, "Dearest lady mine, be of good cheer, for tomorrow thou shalt certainly have thine Aldobrandino here again safe and sound; and to give her more entire assurance thereof, he fully recounted to her that which he had done. Whereupon she, glad as ever woman was of two so sudden and so happy chances, to wit, the having her lover alive again, whom she verily believed to have bewept dead, and the seeing Aldobrandino free from peril, whose death she looked ere many days to have to mourn, affectionately embraced and kissed Tedaldo; then, feeling happily much better in spirit at the fortunate outcome, they made glad and gracious peace and continued their lovemaking. Whenas the day drew near, Tedaldo arose, after showing the lady that which he purposed to do and praying her anew to keep it a close secret, and went forth, even in his pilgrim's habit,

to attend, whenas it should be time, to Aldobrandino's affairs. The day come, it appearing to the Seignory that they had full information of the matter, they straightway discharged Aldobrandino and a few days after let strike off the murderers' heads whereas they had committed the crime.

Aldobrandino being now, to the great joy of himself and his wife and of all his friends and kinsfolk, free and manifestly acknowledging that he owed his deliverance to the good offices of the pilgrim, carried the latter to his house for such time as it pleased him to sojourn in the city; and there they could not sate themselves of doing him honor and worship, especially the lady, who knew with whom she had to do. After awhile, deeming it time to bring his brothers to an accord with Aldobrandino and knowing that they were not only put to shame by the latter's acquittance, but went armed for fear [of his resentment], he demanded of his host the fulfillment of his promise. Aldobrandino freely answered that he was ready, whereupon the pilgrim caused him prepare against the morrow a goodly banquet, whereat he told him he would have him and his kinsmen and kinswomen entertain the four brothers and their ladies, adding that he himself would go incontinent and bid the latter on his part to his banquet. Aldobrandino consenting to all that liked the pilgrim, the latter forthright betook himself to the four brothers and plying them with store of such words as behooved unto the matter, in fine, with irrepugnable arguments, brought them easily enough to consent to regain Aldobrandino's friendship by asking pardon; which done, he invited them and their ladies to dinner with Aldobrandino next morning, and they, being certified of his good faith, frankly accepted the invitation.

Accordingly, on the morrow, towards dinner-time, Tedaldo's four brothers, clad all in black as they were, came, with sundry of their friends, to the house of Aldobrandino, who stayed for them, and there, in the presence of all who had been bidden of him to bear them company, cast down their arms and committed themselves to his mercy, craving forgiveness of that which they had wrought against him.

Aldobrandino, weeping, received them affectionately, and kissing them all on the mouth, dispatched the matter in a few words, remitting unto them every injury received. After them came their wives and sisters, clad all in sad-colored raiment, and were graciously received by Madam Ermellina and the other ladies. Then were all, ladies and men alike, magnificently entertained at the banquet, nor was there aught in the entertainment other than commendable, except it were the taciturnity occasioned by the yet fresh sorrow expressed in the somber raiment of Tedaldo's kinsfolk. Now on this account the pilgrim's device of the banquet had been blamed of some and he had observed it; wherefore, the time being come to do away the constraint aforesaid, he rose to his feet, accordingly as he had fore-ordained in himself, what while the rest still ate of the fruits, and said, "Nothing hath lacked to this entertainment that should make it joyful, save only Tedaldo himself; whom (since, having had him continually with you, you have not known him) I will e'en discover to you."

So saying, he cast off his palmer's gown and all other his pilgrim's weeds and abiding in a jerkin of green sendal, was, with no little amazement, long eyed and considered of all, ere any would venture to believe that it was indeed he. Tedaldo, seeing this, recounted many particulars of the relations and things betided between them, as well as of his own adventures; whereupon his brethren and the other gentlemen present ran all to embrace him, with eyes full of joyful tears, as after did the ladies on like wise, as well strangers as kinswomen, except only Madam Ermellina. Which Aldobrandino seeing, "What is this, Ermellina?" quoth he. "Why dost thou not welcome Tedaldo, as do the other ladies?" Whereto she answered, in the hearing of all, "There is none who had more gladly welcomed and would yet welcome him than myself, who am more beholden to him than any other woman, seeing that by his means I have gotten thee again; but the unseemly words spoken in the days when we mourned him whom we deemed Tedaldo made me refrain therefrom." Quoth her husband, "Go to; thinkest thou I believe in the howlers? He hath right well shown their prate to be false

by procuring my deliverance; more by token that I never believed it. Quick, rise and go and embrace him."

The lady, who desired nothing better, was not slow to obey her husband in this and accordingly, arising, embraced Tedaldo, as the other ladies had done, and gave him joyous welcome. This liberality of Aldobrandino was mighty pleasing to Tedaldo's brothers and to every man and woman there, and thereby all suspect that had been aroused in the minds of some by the words aforesaid was done away. Then, every one having given Tedaldo joy, he with his own hands rent the black clothes on his brothers' backs and the sad-colored on those of his sisters and kinswomen and would have them send after other apparel, which whenas they had donned, they gave themselves to singing and dancing and other diversions galore; wherefore the banquet, which had a silent beginning, had a loud-resounding ending. Thereafter, with the utmost mirth, they one and all repaired, even as they were, to Tedaldo's house, where they supped that night, and on this wise they continued the feast several days longer.

The Florentines awhile regarded Tedaldo with amazement, as a man risen from the dead; nay, in many an one's mind, and even in that of his brethren, there abode a certain faint doubt an he were indeed himself and they did not yet thoroughly believe it nor belike had they believed it for a long time to come but for a chance which made them clear who the murdered man was and which was on this wise. There passed one day before their house certain footmen of Lunigiana, who, seeing Tedaldo, made towards him and said, "Give you good day, Faziuolo." Whereto Tedaldo in his brothers' presence answered, "You mistake me." The others, hearing him speak, were abashed and cried him pardon, saying, "Forsooth you resemble, more than ever we saw one man favor another, a comrade of ours called Faziuolo of Pontremoli, who came hither some fortnight or more ago, nor could we ever since learn what is come of him. Indeed, we marveled at the dress, for that he was a soldier, even as we are." Tedaldo's elder brother, hearing this, came forward and inquired how this Faziuolo had been clad. They told him and it was found to have been punc-

tually as they said; wherefore, what with these and what with other tokens, it was known for certain that he who had been slain was Faziuolo and not Tedaldo, and all doubt of the latter accordingly departed (the minds of) his brothers and of every other. Tedaldo, then, being returned very rich, persevered in his love and the lady falling out with him no more, they continued to love each other.



A KNIGHT OF THE KING OF SPAIN

A knight in the king's service of Spain thinking himself ill guerdoned, the king by very certain proof sheweth him that this is not his fault, but that of his own perverse fortune, and after largesseth him magnificently.

YOU must know, that, among the other gallant gentlemen who have from time immemorial graced our city, there was one (and maybe the most of worth) by name Messer Ruggieri de' Figiovanni, who, being both rich and high-spirited and seeing that, in view of the way of living and of the usages of Tuscany, he might, if he tarried there, avail to display little or nothing of his merit, resolved to seek service awhile with Alfonso, King of Spain, the renown of whose valiance transcended that of every other prince of his time; wherefore he betook himself, very honorably furnished with arms and horses and followers, to Alfonso in Spain and was by him graciously received. Accordingly, he took up his abode there and living splendidly and doing marvelous deeds of arms, he very soon made himself known for a man of worth and valor.

When he had sojourned there a pretty while and had taken particular note of the king's fashions, himseemed he bestowed castles and cities and baronies now upon one and now upon another with little enough discretion, as giving them to those who were unworthy thereof, and for that to him, who held himself for that which he was, nothing was given, he conceived that his repute would be much abated by reason thereof; wherefore he determined to depart and craved leave of the king. The latter granted him the leave he sought and gave him one of the best and finest mules that ever was ridden, the which, for the long journey he had to make, was very acceptable to Messer Ruggieri. Moreover, he charged a discreet servant of his that he should study, by such means as seemed to him best, to ride with Messer Ruggieri on such wise that he should not appear to have been sent by the king, and note everything he should say of him, so as he might avail to repeat it to

him, and that on the ensuing morning he should command him return to the court. Accordingly, the servant, lying in wait for Messer Ruggieri's departure, accosted him, as he came forth the city, and very aptly joined company with him, giving him to understand that he also was bound for Italy. Messer Ruggieri, then, fared on, riding the mule given him by the king and devising of one thing and another with the latter's servant, till hard upon tierce, when he said, "Methinketh it were well done to let our beasts stale." Accordingly, they put them up in a stable and they staled, except the mule; then they rode on again, whilst the squire still took note of the gentleman's words, and came presently to a river, where, as they watered their cattle, the mule staled in the stream; which Messer Ruggieri seeing, "Marry," quoth he, "God confound thee, beast, for that thou art made after the same fashion as the prince who gave thee to me!" The squire noted these words and albeit he took store of many others, as he journeyed with him all that day, he heard him say nought else but what was to the highest praise of the king.

Next morning, they being mounted and Ruggieri offering to ride towards Tuscany, the squire imparted to him the king's commandment, whereupon he incontinent turned back. When he arrived at court, the king, learning what he had said of the mule, let call him to himself and receiving him with a cheerful favor, asked him why he had likened him to his mule, or rather why he had likened the mule to him. "My lord," replied Ruggieri frankly, "I likened her to you for that, like as you give whereas it behooveth not and give not whereas it behooveth, even so she staled not whereas it behooved, but staled whereas it behooved not." Then said the king, "Messer Ruggieri, if I have not given to you, as I have given unto many who are of no account in comparison with you, it happened not because I knew you not for a most valiant cavalier and worthy of every great gift; nay, but it is your fortune, which hath not suffered me guerdon you according to your deserts, that hath sinned in this, and not I; and that I say sooth I will manifestly prove to you." "My lord," replied Ruggieri, "I was not chagrined because I have gotten no largesse of you,

for that I desired not to be richer than I am, but because you have on no wise borne witness to my merit. Natheless, I hold your excuse for good and honorable and am ready to see that which it shall please you show me, albeit I believe you without proof." The king then carried him into a great hall of his, where, as he had ordered it before hand, were two great locked coffers, and said to him, in presence of many, "Messer Ruggieri, in one of these coffers is my crown, the royal scepter and the orb, together with many goodly girdles and ouches and rings of mine, and in fine every precious jewel I have; and the other is full of earth. Take, then, one and be that which you shall take yours; and you may thus see whether of the twain hath been ungrateful to your worth, myself or your ill fortune."

Messer Ruggieri, seeing that it was the king's pleasure, took one of the coffers, which, being opened by Alfonsos' commandment, was found to be that which was full of earth; whereupon quoth the king, laughing, "Now can you see, Messer Ruggieri, that this that I tell you of your fortune is true; but certes your worth meriteth that I should oppose myself to her might. I know you have no mind to turn Spaniard and therefore I will bestow upon you neither castle nor city in these parts; but this coffer, of which fortune deprived you, I will in her despite shall be yours, so you may carry it off to your own country and justly glorify yourself of your worth in the sight of your countrymen by the witness of my gifts." Messer Ruggieri accordingly took the coffer and having rendered the king those thanks which sorted with such a gift, joyfully returned therewith to Tuscany.



THE LOCKED-OUT WIFE TURNS THE TABLES

Tofano one night shutteth his wife out of doors, who, availing not to re-enter by dint of entreaties, feigneth to cast herself into a well and casteth therein a great stone. Tofano cometh forth of the house and runneth thither, whereupon she slippeth in and locking him out, bawleth reproaches at him from the window.

THERE was once, in Arezzo a rich man called Tofano and he was given to wife a very fair lady, by name Madam Ghita, of whom, without knowing why, he quickly waxed jealous. The lady, becoming aware of this, was despited thereat and questioned him once and again of the reasons of his jealousy; but he was able to assign her none, save such as were general and naught; wherefore it occurred to her mind to cause him die of the disease whereof he stood without reason in fear. Accordingly, perceiving that a young man, who was much to her taste, sighed for her, she proceeded discreetly to come to an understanding with him and things being so far advanced between them that there lacked but with deeds to give effect to words, she cast about for a means of bringing this also to pass; wherefore, having already remarked, amongst her husband's other ill usances that he delighted in drinking, she began not only to commend this to him, but would often artfully incite him thereto. This became so much his wont that, well nigh whensoever it pleased her, she led him to drink even to intoxication, and putting him to bed whenas she saw him well drunken, she a first time foregathered with her lover, with whom many a time thereafter she continued to do as in all security. Indeed, she grew to put such trust in her husband's drunkenness that not only did she make bold to bring her gallant into the house, but went whiles to pass a great part of the night with him in his own house, which was not very far distant.

The enamored lady continuing on this wise, it befell that the wretched husband came to perceive that she, whilst encouraging him to drink, natheless herself drank never; wherefore suspicion took him that it might be as in truth

it was, to wit, that she made him drunken, so she might after do her pleasure what while he slept, and wishing to make proof of this, an it were so, he one evening, not having drunken that day, feigned himself, both in words and fashions, the drunkenest man that was aye. The lady, believing this and judging that he needed no more drink, put him to bed in all haste and this done, betook herself, as she was used to do whiles, to the house of her lover, where she abode till midnight. As for Tofano, no sooner did he know the lady to have left the house than he straightway arose and going to the doors, locked them from within; after which he posted himself at the window, so he might see her return and show her that he had gotten wind of her fashions; and there he abode till such time as she came back. The lady, returning home and finding herself locked out, was beyond measure woeful and began to essay an she might avail to open the door by force, which after Tofano had awhile suffered, "Wife," quoth he, "thou weariest thyself in vain, for thou canst nowise come in here again. Go, get thee back whereas thou hast been till now and be assured that thou shalt never return hither till such time as I shall have done thee, in respect of this affair, such honor as beseemeth thee in the presence of thy kinsfolk and of the neighbors."

The lady fell to beseeching him for the love of God that it would please him open to her, for that she came not whence he supposed, but from keeping vigil with a she-neighbor of hers, for that the nights were long and she could not sleep them all out nor watch at home alone. However, prayers profited her nought, for that her brute of a husband was minded to have all the Aretines know their shame, whereas none as yet knew it; wherefore, seeing that prayers availed her not, she had recourse to threats and said, "An thou open not to me, I will make thee the woe-fullest man alive." "And what canst thou do to me?" asked Tofano, and Mistress Tessa, whose wits Love had already whetted with his counsels, replied, "Rather than brook the shame which thou wouldst wrongfully cause me suffer, I will cast myself into this well that is herenigh, where when I am found dead, there is none will believe other-

wise than that thou, for very drunkenness, hast cast me therein; wherefore it will behoove thee flee and lose all thou hast and abide in banishment or have thy head cut off for my murderer, as thou wilt in truth have been."

Tofano was nowise moved by these words from his besotted intent; wherefore quoth she to him, "Harkye now, I can no longer brook this thy fashery; God pardon it thee! Look thou cause lay up this distaff of mine that I leave here." So saying, the night being so dark that one might scarce see other by the way, she went up to the well and taking a great stone that lay thereby, cried out, "God pardon me!" and let it drop into the water. The stone, striking the water, made a very great noise which when Tofano heard, he verily believed that she had cast herself in; wherefore, snatching up the bucket and the rope, he rushed out of the house and ran to the well to succor her. The lady, who had hidden herself near the door, no sooner saw him run to the well than she slipped into the house and locked herself in; then, getting her to the window, "You should water your wine, whenas you drink it," quoth she, "and not after and by night." Tofano, hearing this, knew himself to have been fooled and returned to the door, but could get no admission and proceeded to bid her open to him; but she left speaking softly, as she had done till then, and began, well nigh at a scream, to say, "By Christ His Cross, tiresome sot that thou art, thou shalt not enter here to-night; I cannot brook these thy fashions any longer; needs must I let every one see what manner of man thou art and at what hour thou comest home nights." Tofano, on his side, flying into a rage, began to rail at her and bawl; whereupon the neighbors, hearing the clamor, arose, both men and women, and coming to the windows, asked what was to do. The lady answered, weeping, "It is this wretch of a man, who still returneth to me of an evening, drunken, or falleth asleep about the taverns and after cometh home at this hour; the which I have long suffered, but, it availing me not and I being unable to put up with it longer, I have bethought me to shame him therefor by locking him out of doors, to see an he will mend himself thereof."

Tofano, on the other hand, told them, like an ass as he

was, how the case stood and threatened her sore, but she said to the neighbors, "Look you now what a man he is! What would you say, were I in the street, as he is, and he in the house, as am I? By God His faith, I doubt me you would believe he said sooth. By this you may judge of his wit; he saith I have done just what methinketh he hath himself done. He thought to fear me by casting I know not what into the well; but would God he had cast himself therein in good sooth and drowned himself, so he might have well watered the wine which he hath drunken to excess." The neighbors, both men and women, all fell to blaming Tofano, holding him at fault, and chid him for that which he said against the lady; and in a short time the report was so noised abroad from neighbor to neighbor that it reached the ears of the lady's kinsfolk, who came thither and hearing the thing from one and another of the neighbors, took Tofano and gave him such a drubbing that they broke every bone in his body. Then, entering the house, they took the lady's gear and carried her off home with them, threatening Tofano with worse. The latter, finding himself in ill case and seeing that his jealousy had brought him to a sorry pass, for that he still loved his wife heartily, procured certain friends to intercede for him and so wrought that he made his peace with the lady and had her home again with him, promising her that he would never be jealous again. Moreover, he gave her leave to do her every pleasure, provided she wrought so discreetly that he should know nothing thereof; and on this wise, like a crack-brained churl as he was, he made peace after suffering damage. So long live Love and death to war and all its company!



THE STORY OF THE VAT

Peronella hideth a lover of hers in a vat, upon her husband's unlooked for return, and hearing from the latter that he hath sold the vat, avoucheth herself to have sold it to one who is presently therewithin, to see if it be sound; whereupon the gallant, jumping out of the vat, causeth the husband scrape it out for him and after carry it home to his house.

IN NAPLES no great while ago there was a poor man who took to wife a fair and lovesome damsel called Peronella, and albeit he with his craft, which was that of a mason, and she by spinning, earned but a slender pittance, they ordered their life as best they might. It chanced one day that a young gallant of the neighborhood saw this Peronella and she pleasing him mightily, he fell in love with her and importuned her one way and another till he became familiar with her and they took order with each other on this wise, so they might be together; to wit, seeing that her husband arose every morning betimes to go to work or to find work, they agreed that the young man should be whereas he might see him go out, and that, as soon as he was gone,—the street where she abode, which was called Avorio, being very solitary,—he should come to her house. On this wise they did many times, but one morning, the good man having gone out and Giannello Strignario (for so was the lover named) having entered the house and being with Peronella, it chanced that, after a while, the husband returned home, whereas it was his wont to be abroad all day, and finding the door locked within, knocked and after fell a-saying in himself, “O my God, praised be Thou ever! For, though Thou hast made me poor, at least Thou hast comforted me with a good and honest damsel to wife. See how she locked the door within as soon as I was gone out, so none might enter to do her any annoy.”

Peronella, knowing her husband by his way of knocking, said to her lover, “Alack, Giannello mine, I am a dead woman! For here is my husband, whom God confound, come back and I know not what this meaneth, for never

yet came he back hither at this hour; belike he saw thee whenas thou enteredst here. But, for the love of God, however the case may be, get thee into yonder vat, whilst I go open to him, and we shall see what is the meaning of his returning home so early this morning." Accordingly, Giannello betook himself in all haste into the vat, whilst Peronella, going to the door, opened to her husband and said to him, with an angry air, "What is to do now, that thou returnest home so soon this morning? Meseemeth thou hast a mind to do nought to-day, that I see thee come back, tools in hand; and if thou do thus, on what are we to live? Whence shall we get bread? Thinkest thou I will suffer thee pawn my gown and my other poor clothes? I, who do nothing but spin day and night, till the flesh is come apart from my nails, so I may at the least have so much oil as will keep our lamp burning! Husband, husband, there is not a neighbor's wife of ours but marvelleth thereat and maketh mock of me for the pains I give myself and all that I endure; and thou, thou returnest home to me, with thy hands a-dangle, whenas thou shouldst be at work."

So saying, she fell a-weeping and went on to say, "Alack, woe is me, unhappy woman that I am! In what an ill hour was I born, at what an ill moment did I come hither! I who might have had a young man of such worth and would none of him, so I might come to this fellow here, who taketh no thought to her whom he hath brought home! Other women give themselves a good time with their lovers, for there is none [I know] but hath two and some three, and they enjoy themselves and show their husbands the moon for the sun. But I, wretch that I am! because I am good and occupy myself not with such toys, I suffer ill and ill hap. I know not why I do not take me a lover, as do other women. Understand well, husband mine, that, had I a mind to do ill, I could soon enough find the wherewithal, for there be store of brisk young fellows who love me and wish me well and have sent to me, proffering money galore or dresses and jewels, at my choice; but my heart would never suffer me to do it, for that I was no mother's daughter

of that ilk; and here thou comest home to me, whenas thou shouldst be at work."

"Good lack, wife," answered the husband, "fret not thyself, for God's sake; thou shouldst be assured that I know what manner of woman thou art, and indeed this morning I have in part had proof thereof. It is true that I went out to go to work; but it seemeth thou knowest not, as I myself knew not, that this is the Feast-day of San Galeone and there is no work doing; that is why I am come back at this hour; but none the less I have provided and found a means how we shall have bread for more than a month, for I have sold yonder man thou seest here with me the vat which, as thou knowest, hath this long while cumbered the house; and he is to give me five lily-florins for it." Quoth Peronella, "So much the more cause have I to complain; thou, who art a man and goest about and shouldst be versed in the things of the world, thou hast sold a vat for five florins, whilst I, a poor silly woman who hath scarce ever been without the door, seeing the hindrance it gave us in the house, have sold it for seven to an honest man, who entered it but now, as thou camest back, to see if it were sound." When the husband heard this, he was more than satisfied and said to him who had come for the vat, "Good man, begone in peace; for thou hearest that my wife hath sold the vat for seven florins, whereas thou wast to give me but five for it." "Good," replied the other and went his way; whereupon quoth Peronella to her husband, "Since thou art here, come up and settle with him thyself." Giannello, who abode with his ears pricked up to hear if it behoved him fear or be on his guard against aught, hearing his mistress's words, straightway scrambled out of the vat and cried out, as if he had heard nothing of the husband's return, "Where art thou, good wife?" Whereupon the goodman, coming up, answered, "Here am I; what wouldst thou have?" "Who art thou?" asked Giannello. "I want the woman with whom I made the bargain for this vat." Quoth the other, "You may deal with me in all assurance, for I am her husband." Then said Giannello, "The vat appeareth to me sound enough; but meseemeth you have kept

dregs or the like therein, for it is all overcrusted with I know not what that is so hard and dry that I cannot remove aught thereof with my nails; wherefore I will not take it, except I first see it clean." "Nay," answered Peronella, "the bargain shall not fall through for that; my husband will clean it all out." "Ay will I," rejoined the latter, and laying down his tools, put off his coat; then, calling for a light and a scraper, he entered the vat and fell to scraping. Peronella as if she had a mind to see what he did, thrust her head and one of her arms, shoulder and all, in at the mouth of the vat, which was not overbig, and fell to saying, "Scrape here" and "There" and "There also" and "See, here is a little left."

Whilst she was thus engaged in directing her husband and showing him where to scrape, Giannello, who had scarce yet that morning done his full desire, when they were interrupted by the mason's coming, seeing that he could not as he would, bethought himself to accomplish it as he might; wherefore, boarding her, as she held the mouth of the vat all closed up, on such wise as in the ample plains the unbridled stallions, afire with love, assail the mares of Parthia, he satisfied his juvenile ardor, the which enterprise was brought to perfection well nigh at the same moment as the scraping of the vat; whereupon he dismounted and Peronella withdrawing her head from the mouth of the vat, the husband came forth thereof. Then said she to her gallant, "Take this light, good man, and look if it be clean to thy mind." Giannello looked in and said that it was well and that he was satisfied and giving the husband seven florins, caused carry the vat to his own house.

NOTES

NOTE 1.—It is important to the student to place Boccaccio, in so far as he can be placed, in the history of literature and the history of language. The following brief sketch is taken from the *Edinburgh Review* of 1884; it has, however, been considerably modified in accordance with new facts which have since come to light through the recent discovery of various ancient documents, etc.

Dante, the epic poet, Petrarch, the lyric, and Boccaccio, the great master of the *novella*, were all Florentines; and their "Divinia Commedia," "Canzoniere," "Decameron," were the symbols of nascent humanism, and determined the course of Renaissance poetry and fiction. Giovanni Boccaccio, the depicter of the "Commedia Umana," was one of the very greatest of story-tellers. Nor was he only the first modern novelist. He also, as Dr. Garnett reminds us in his admirable history of "Italian Literature," broke new ground with his ideal and pastoral romances. It is now practically certain that he was born in 1313, at Paris; his father, who several years before had left the small town of Certaldo and moved to Florence (then one of the busiest commercial cities of Europe), spent several years in France in connection with his business affairs. He returned to Italy in 1314; very soon afterwards Boccaccio, still an infant, was sent to his father in Florence, where he spent his boyhood and much of his later life. In 1375 he died and was buried at Certaldo, where his family had held a small property for some generations. He called himself *Giovanni Boccaccio, di Chellino da Certaldo* (i.e. son of Chellino from Certaldo); until very recently it remained doubtful whether Paris, Florence, or Certaldo was his birthplace.

The same obscurity which long involved Boccaccio's birth obscures most of the facts of his life. Of his mother we know little; her Christian name was apparently Jeanne, her surname perhaps De la Roche; it seems unquestionable that Boccaccio was an illegitimate child. The father and son were not, could not be, always good

friends. At one time Boccaccio said of his father and the paternal house: "Here one laughs but seldom. The dark, silent, melancholy house keeps and holds me much against my will, where the sour and horrible aspect of an old man frigid, uncouth, and miserly, continually adds affliction to my saddened mood." Later, however, he regularly referred to his father with much more kindness.

It was at first designed to make a merchant of Boccaccio, and with this object he was placed with a mercantile house in Naples. But the boy's dislike to trade proved insuperable. Then his father decided to make him a canonist; but though Boccaccio read law at the Neapolitan University, he devoted himself only to the Muses. *Dulces ante omnia Musae.*

In later years the great help and stay of Boccaccio was Petrarch, who aided him with advice and sympathy. The two first met in 1350, and soon became great friends; in 1351 Boccaccio was sent by Florence to negotiate the return of Petrarch, but the lover of Laura could not be induced to settle in the fair city of the raging factions. As Petrarch first saw Laura in a church in Avignon, so Boccaccio first saw Fiammetta in the church of San Lorenzo in Naples. This was in 1336. Fiammetta was the poetical name which Boccaccio conferred upon a beautiful young wife, who was apparently Maria d'Aquino, a natural daughter of Robert of Anjou, King of Naples. Boccaccio was strongly attracted by her, and lost no opportunity of celebrating in literature the charms and merits of the high-born goddess of his worship. Various facts suggest that he was a favoured *cavaliere servente* of the quasi-royal lady, and this although she had a young and handsome husband. Such amours were common in the Italy of Boccaccio's time; and he may well have been an attractive lover. The *liaison* between the poet and the lady was broken off by her some time before 1340, when he had to leave Naples to join his father in Florence.

While in Naples, busily writing for the entertainment of Fiammetta his prose romance of "Filopoco," his long poem the "Filostrato"—which inspired Chaucer's "Troi-

lus and Cressida" and influenced Shakespeare's play bearing the same name—and other works, Boccaccio was recalled by his father to Florence. Arrived there, he would seem to have forgotten Fiammetta; for he had other love affairs, and at one time paid court to a Florentine widow, who, however, repelled his suit with contempt and made him something of a laughing-stock. Thereupon Boccaccio pilloried her in "Il Corbaccio," one of the most savage and the foulest of his writings. He attacked, through vindictive slander and satire, all womankind, and especially that one lady. A second visit to Naples seems to have been made in 1348; it was at about this time that he began to write the "Decameron," which he is supposed to have completed in 1353.

Dunlop, in his "History of Fiction," says of the "Decameron":

"There are few works which have had an equal influence on literature with the Decameron of Boccaccio. Even in England its effects were powerful. From it Chaucer adapted the notion of the frame in which he has enclosed his tales, and the general manner of his stories, while in some instances, as we have seen, he has merely versified the novels of the Italian. In 1566, William Paynter printed many of Boccaccio's stories in English, in his work called 'The Palace of Pleasure.' This first translation contained sixty novels, and it was soon followed by another volume, comprehending thirty-four additional tales. These are the pages of which Shakespeare made so much use. From Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' we learn that one of the great amusements of our ancestors was reading Boccaccio aloud, an entertainment of which the effects were speedily visible in the literature of the country. The first English translation, however, of the whole Decameron, did not appear till 1620. In France, Boccaccio found early and illustrious imitators. In his own country he brought his native language to perfection, and gave stability to a mode of composition which before his time had only existed in a rude state in Italy; he collected the current tales of the age, which he decorated with new circum-

stances, and delivered in a style which has no parallel for elegance, naïveté, and grace. Hence his popularity was unbounded, and his imitators more numerous than those of any author recorded in the annals of literature."

NOTE 2.—This story of three rings formed the basis of Lessing's great play, "Nathan der Weise."

NOTE 3.—The story of the Marquess of Saluzzo and the peasant girl, Griselda, is one of the most remarkable pieces of fiction written in any language. It is terrible in the picture it gives of the unswerving purpose, brutality, and courage of man, exhibited in the character of Saluzzo; beautiful in the faith, constancy and appalling devotion of woman, as visioned through the character of Griselda; and a masterpiece from the point of view of literary construction. It has made a profound impression upon great writers through the last five hundred years, and has been used in part or in whole time and time again by writers, great and small. Chaucer in his "Canterbury Tales" used it under the title of "Griselda." Halm, the author of "Ingomar," used it in his play called "Griseldis." "No story of Boccaccio is so well known or has so deeply permeated literature or stirred the compassion and pity of humanity. We are too apt to judge Griselda by the manners and ideas of our own day; but, if we would really understand her unnatural patience—unnatural as it appears to us—we must throw ourselves back into the day in which she lived and suffered and was so cruelly treated; and we must comprehend the old ideas which governed the relations between man and wife, between men and women, noble and peasant. Griselda has a virtue, but it is pushed almost to burlesque. Even in the Middle Ages she would have been considered an eccentric, since, being mother as well as wife, her position increases immeasurably the pathos of her story. Boccaccio is emphatic in insisting upon the absolute and almost incredible obedience of the meek Griselda to her cruel lord. This abject submission seems almost inhuman, because, in most women, the maternal instinct is stronger even than the sense of wifely devotion." (*Edinburgh Review*).

NOTE 4.—This is the story from which Dryden took the material for his poem, "Sigismunda and Guiscardo."

NOTE 5.—In the original Italian Boccaccio has no titles for his stories but gives in the place of titles short abstracts of the plot of each tale. Here titles have been substituted to follow the present methods of short story writers.

NOTE 6.—This story forms the basis of Shakespeare's "Cymbeline." Several suggestions came from it, such as the wager about a pure woman's virtue and honor, and the transportation of the villain in a trunk into her bed-chamber. "It is always of great interest to study Shakespeare's treatment of the themes afforded by chronicles or *novella*, and to note where he follows and where he departs from his suggestive authority. Bernard and Ambrose are sublimed into Posthumous and Iachima; but Zineura remains closer to the peerless Imogen. The scene and date of the action are wholly changed; but the wonder and delight caused by Shakespeare's treatment are fascinating for all time and his work retains the magic of his individual and supreme genius." (*Edinburgh Review*).

NOTE 7.—This is the story from which Dryden took the material for his poem, "Cymon and Iphigenia."

NOTE 8.—This story is the source from which Tennyson took his plot for his poem entitled "The Falcon."

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